

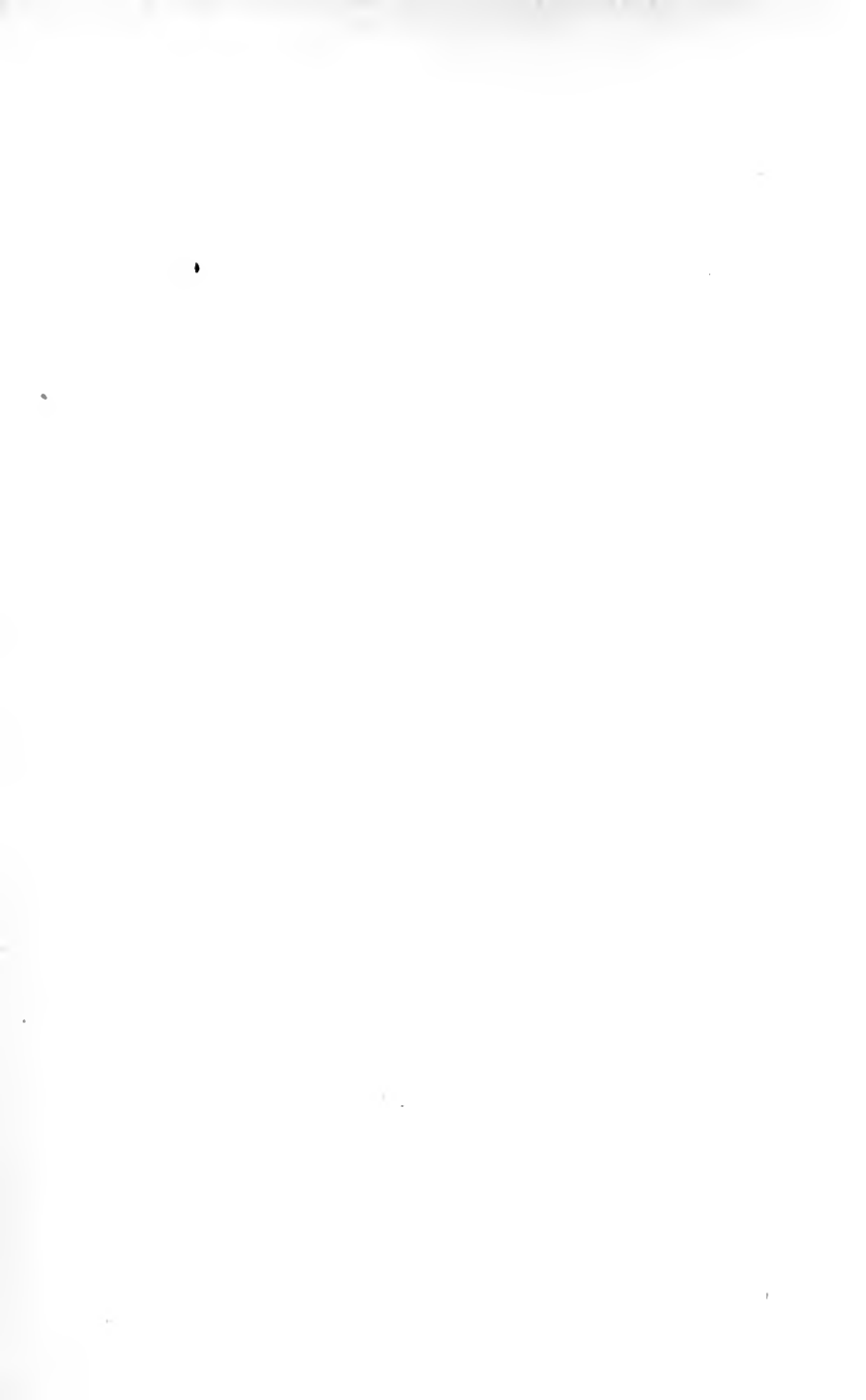
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March 1901



SKETCHES AND STUDIES IN
ITALY AND GREECE

THIRD SERIES

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SKETCHES AND STUDIES
IN
ITALY AND GREECE

BY
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'RENAISSANCE IN ITALY' 'STUDIES OF THE GREEK POETS'
ETC.

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SKETCHES AND STUDIES

IN

ITALY AND GREECE

FOLGORE DA SAN GEMIGNANO

STUDENTS of Mr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's translations from the early Italian poets (*Dante and his Circle*. Ellis & White, 1874) will not fail to have noticed the striking figure made among those jejune imitators of Provençal mannerism by two rhymesters, Cecco Angiolieri and Folgore da San Gemignano. Both belong to the school of Siena, and both detach themselves from the metaphysical fashion of their epoch by clearness of intention and directness of style. The sonnets of both are remarkable for what in the critical jargon of to-day might be termed realism. Cecco is even savage and brutal. He anticipates Villon from afar, and is happily described by Mr. Rossetti as the prodigal or 'scamp' of the Dantesque circle. The case is different with Folgore. There is no poet who breathes a fresher air of gentleness. He writes in images, dealing but little with ideas. Every line presents a picture, and each picture has the charm of a miniature fancifully drawn and brightly coloured on a missal-margin. Cecco and Folgore alike have abandoned the

mediæval mysticism which sounds unreal on almost all Italian lips but Dante's. True Italians, they are content to live for life's sake, and to take the world as it presents itself to natural senses. But Cecco is perverse and impious. His love has nothing delicate; his hatred is a morbid passion. At his worst or best (for his best writing is his worst feeling) we find him all but rabid. If Caligula, for instance, had written poetry, he might have piqued himself upon the following sonnet; only we must do Cecco the justice of remembering that his rage is more than half ironical and humorous:—

An I were fire, I would burn up the world;
 An I were wind, with tempest I'd it break;
 An I were sea, I'd drown it in a lake;
 An I were God, to hell I'd have it hurled;
 An I were Pope, I'd see disaster whirled
 O'er Christendom, deep joy thereof to take;
 An I were Emperor, I'd quickly make
 All heads of all folk from their necks be twirled;
 An I were death, I'd to my father go;
 An I were life, forthwith from him I'd fly;
 And with my mother I'd deal even so;
 An I were Cecco, as I am but I,
 Young girls and pretty for myself I'd hold,
 But let my neighbours take the plain and old.

Of all this there is no trace in Folgore. The worst a moralist could say of him, is that he sought out for himself a life of pure enjoyment. The famous Sonnets on the Months give particular directions for pastime in a round of pleasure suited to each season. The Sonnets on the Days are conceived in a like hedonistic spirit. But these series are specially addressed to members of the Glad Brigades and Spending Companies, which were common in the great mercantile cities of mediæval Italy. Their tone is doubtless due to the occasion of their composition, as compliments to Messer Nicholò di Nisi and Messer Guerra Cavicciuoli.

The mention of these names reminds me that a word need be said about the date of Folgore. Mr. Rossetti does not dispute the commonly assigned date of 1260, and takes for granted that the Messer Nicolò of the Sonnets on the Months was the Sieneſe gentleman referred to by Dante in a certain paſſage of the ‘*Inferno*’:¹—

And to the Poet ſaid I: ‘Now was ever
 So vain a people as the Sieneſe?
 Not for a certainty the French by far.’
 Whereat the other leper, who had heard me,
 Replied unto my ſpeech: ‘Taking out Stricca,
 Who knew the art of moderate expenſes,
 And Nicolò, who the luxurious uſe
 Of cloves diſcovered earlieſt of all
 Within that garden where ſuch ſeed takes root.
 And taking out the band, among whom ſquandered
 Caccia d’ Aſcian his vineyards and vaſt woods,
 And where his wit the Abbagliato proffered.’

Now Folgore refers in his political ſonnets to events of the years 1314 and 1315; and the correct reading of a line in his laſt ſonnet on the Months gives the name of Nicholò di Nisi to the leader of Folgore’s ‘blithe and lordly Fellowship.’ The firſt of theſe facts leads us to the concluſion that Folgore flouriſhed in the firſt quarter of the fourteenth, inſtead of in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. The ſecond prevents our identifying Nicholò di Nisi with the Niccolò de’ Salimbeni, who is thought to have been the founder of the Fellowship of the Carnation. Furthermore, documents have recently been brought to light which mention at San Gemignano, in the years 1305 and 1306, a certain Folgore. There is no ſufficient reaſon to identify this Folgore with the poet; but the name, to ſay the leaſt, is ſo peculiar that its occurrence in the records of ſo ſmall a town as San Gemignano gives ſome confirmation to the hypotheſis of the

¹ *Inferno*, xxix. 121.—*Longfellow*.

poet's later date. Taking these several considerations together, I think we must abandon the old view that Folgore was one of the earliest Tuscan poets, a view which is, moreover, contradicted by his style. Those critics, at any rate, who still believe him to have been a predecessor of Dante's, are forced to reject as spurious the political sonnets referring to Monte Catini and the plunder of Lucca by Uguccone della Faggiuola. Yet these sonnets rest on the same manuscript authority as the Months and Days, and are distinguished by the same qualities.¹

Whatever may be the date of Folgore, whether we assign his period to the middle of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, there is no doubt but that he presents us with a very lively picture of Italian manners, drawn from the point of view of the high bourgeoisie. It is on this account that I have thought it worth while to translate five of his Sonnets on Knighthood, which form the fragment that remains to us from a series of seventeen. Few poems better illustrate the temper of Italian aristocracy when the civil wars of two centuries had forced the nobles to enroll themselves among the burghers, and when what little chivalry had taken root in Italy was fast decaying in a gorgeous overbloom of luxury. The institutions of feudal knighthood had lost their sterner meaning for our poet. He uses them for the suggestion of delicate allegories fancifully painted. Their mysterious significance is turned to gaiety, their piety to amorous delight, their grimness to refined enjoyment. Still these changes are effected with perfect good taste and in perfect good faith. Something of the perfume of true

¹ The above points are fully discussed by Signor Giulio Navone, in his recent edition of *Le Rime di Folgore da San Gemignano e di Cene da la Chitarra d' Arezzo*. Bologna: Romagnoli, 1880. I may further mention that in the sonnet on the Pisans, translated on p. 18, which belongs to the political series, Folgore uses his own name.

chivalry still lingered in a society which was fast becoming mercantile and diplomatic. And this perfume is exhaled by the petals of Folgore's song-blossom. He has no conception that to readers of *Mort Arthur*, or to Founders of the Garter, to Sir Miles Stapleton, Sir Richard Fitz-Simon, or Sir James Audley, his ideal knight would have seemed but little better than a scented civet-cat. Such knights as his were all that Italy possessed, and the poet-painter was justly proud of them, since they served for finished pictures of the beautiful in life.

The Italians were not a feudal race. During the successive reigns of Lombard, Frankish, and German masters, they had passively accepted, stubbornly resisted feudalism, remaining true to the conviction that they themselves were Roman. In Roman memories they sought the traditions which give consistency to national consciousness. And when the Italian communes triumphed finally over Empire, counts, bishops, and rural aristocracy; then Roman law was speedily substituted for the 'asinine code' of the barbarians, and Roman civility gave its tone to social customs in the place of Teutonic chivalry. Yet just as the Italians borrowed, modified, and misconceived Gothic architecture, so they took a feudal tincture from the nations of the North with whom they came in contact. Their noble families, those especially who followed the Imperial party, sought the honour of knighthood; and even the free cities arrogated to themselves the right of conferring this distinction by diploma on their burghers. The chivalry thus formed in Italy was a decorative institution. It might be compared to the ornamental frontispiece which masks the structural poverty of such Gothic buildings as the Cathedral of Orvieto.

On the descent of the German Emperor into Lombardy, the great vassals who acknowledged him, made knighthood,

among titles of more solid import, the price of their allegiance.¹ Thus the chronicle of the Cortusi for the year 1354 tells us that when Charles IV. 'was advancing through the March, and had crossed the Oglio, and was at the borders of Cremona, in his camp upon the snow, he, sitting upon his horse, did knight the doughty and noble man, Francesco da Carrara, who had constantly attended him with a great train, and smiting him upon the neck with his palm, said: "Be thou a good knight, and loyal to the Empire." Thereupon the noble German peers dismounted, and forthwith buckled on Francesco's spurs. To them the Lord Francesco gave chargers and horses of the best he had.' Immediately afterwards Francesco dubbed several of his own retainers knights. And this was the customary fashion of these Lombard lords. For we read how in the year 1328 Can Grande della Scala, after the capture of Padua, 'returned to Verona, and for the further celebration of his victory upon the last day of October held a court, and made thirty-eight knights with his own hand of the divers districts of Lombardy.' And in 1294 Azzo d'Este 'was knighted by Gerardo da Camino, who then was Lord of Treviso, upon the piazza of Ferrara, before the gate of the Bishop's palace. And on the same day at the same hour the said Lord Marquis Azzo made fifty-two knights with his own hand, namely, the Lord Francesco, his brother, and others of Ferrara, Modena, Bologna, Florence, Padua, and Lombardy; and on this occasion was a great court held in Ferrara.' Another chronicle, referring to the same event, says that the whole expenses of the ceremony, including the rich dresses of the new knights, were at the charge of the Marquis. It was customary, when a noble house had risen to great wealth and

¹ The passages used in the text are chiefly drawn from Muratori's fifty-third Dissertation.

had abundance of fighting men, to increase its prestige and spread abroad its glory by a wholesale creation of knights. Thus the Chronicle of Rimini records a high court held by Pandolfo Malatesta in the May of 1324, when he and his two sons, with two of his near relatives and certain strangers from Florence, Bologna, and Perugia, received this honour. At Siena, in like manner, in the year 1284, 'thirteen of the house of Salimbeni were knighted with great pomp.'

It was not on the battlefield that the Italians sought this honour. They regarded knighthood as a part of their signorial parade. Therefore Republics, in whom perhaps, according to strict feudal notions, there was no fount of honour, presumed to appoint procurators for the special purpose of making knights. Florence, Siena, and Arezzo, after this fashion gave the golden spurs to men who were enrolled in the arts of trade or commerce. The usage was severely criticised by Germans who visited Italy in the Imperial train. Otto Frisingensis, writing the deeds of Frederick Barbarossa, speaks with bitterness thereof: 'To the end that they may not lack means of subduing their neighbours, they think it no shame to gird as knights young men of low birth, or even handicraftsmen in despised mechanic arts, the which folk other nations banish like the plague from honourable and liberal pursuits.' 'Such knights, amid the chivalry of Europe, were not held in much esteem; nor is it easy to see what the cities, which had formally excluded nobles from their government, thought to gain by aping institutions which had their true value only in a feudal society. We must suppose that the Italians were not firmly set enough in their own type to resist an enthusiasm which inflamed all Christendom. At the same time they were too Italian to comprehend the spirit of the thing they borrowed. The knights thus made already contained within themselves the germ of those Condottieri

who reduced the service of arms to a commercial speculation. But they lent splendour to the Commonwealth, as may be seen in the grave line of mounted warriors, steel-clad, with open visors, who guard the commune of Siena in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco. Giovanni Villani, in a passage of his Chronicle which deals with the fair state of Florence just before the outbreak of the Black and White parties, says the city at that epoch numbered 'three hundred Cavalieri di Corredo, with many clubs of knights and squires, who morning and evening went to meat with many men of the court, and gave away on high festivals many robes of vair.' It is clear that these citizen knights were leaders of society, and did their duty to the commonwealth by adding to its joyous cheer. Upon the battlefields of the civil wars, moreover, they sustained at their expense the charges of the cavalry.

Siena was a city much given to parade and devoted to the Imperial cause, in which the institution of chivalry flourished. Not only did the burghers take knighthood from their procurators, but the more influential sought it by a special dispensation from the Emperor. Thus we hear how Nino Tolomei obtained a Cæsarean diploma of knighthood for his son Giovanni, and published it with great pomp to the people in his palace. This Giovanni, when he afterwards entered religion, took the name of Bernard, and founded the Order of Monte Oliveto.

Owing to the special conditions of Italian chivalry, it followed that the new knight, having won his spurs by no feat of arms upon the battlefield, was bounden to display peculiar magnificence in the ceremonies of his investiture. His honour was held to be less the reward of courage than of liberality. And this feeling is strongly expressed in a curious passage of Matteo Villani's Chronicle. 'When the Emperor Charles had received the crown in Rome, as we have said, he

turned towards Siena, and on the 19th day of April arrived at that city; and before he entered the same, there met him people of the commonwealth with great festivity upon the hour of vespers; in the which reception eight burghers, given to display but miserly, to the end they might avoid the charges due to knighthood, did cause themselves then and there to be made knights by him. And no sooner had he passed the gates than many ran to meet him without order in their going or provision for the ceremony, and he, being aware of the vain and light impulse of that folk, enjoined upon the Patriarch to knight them in his name. The Patriarch could not withstay from knighting as many as offered themselves; and seeing the thing so cheap, very many took the honour, who before that hour had never thought of being knighted, nor had made provision of what is required from him who seeketh knighthood, but with light impulse did cause themselves to be borne upon the arms of those who were around the Patriarch; and when they were in the path before him, these raised such an one on high, and took his customary cap off, and after he had had the cheek-blow which is used in knighting, put a gold-fringed cap upon his head, and drew him from the press, and so he was a knight. And after this wise were made four-and-thirty on that evening, of the noble and lesser folk. And when the Emperor had been attended to his lodging, night fell, and all returned home; and the new knights without preparation or expense celebrated their reception into chivalry with their families forthwith. He who reflects with a mind not subject to base avarice upon the coming of a new-crowned Emperor into so famous a city, and bethinks him how so many noble and rich burghers were promoted to the honour of knighthood in their native land, men too by nature fond of pomp, without having made any solemn festival in common or in private to the fame of chivalry,

may judge this people little worthy of the distinction they received.'

This passage is interesting partly as an instance of Florentine spite against Siena, partly as showing that in Italy great munificence was expected from the carpet-knights who had not won their spurs with toil, and partly as proving how the German Emperors, on their parade expeditions through Italy, debased the institutions they were bound to hold in respect. Enfeebled by the extirpation of the last great German house which really reigned in Italy, the Empire was now no better than a cause of corruption and demoralisation to Italian society. The conduct of a man like Charles disgusted even the most fervent Ghibellines; and we find Fazio degli Uberti flinging scorn upon his avarice and baseness in such lines as these :—

Sappi ch' i' son Italia che ti parlo,
 Di Lusimburgo *ignominioso Carlo* . . .
 Veggendo te aver tese tue arti
A tór danari e gir con essi a casa . . .
 Tu dunque, Giove, perche 'l Santo uccello
 Da questo Carlo quarto
 Imperador non togli e dalle mani
Degli altri, lurchi moderni Germani
Che d' aquila un allocco n' hanno fatto?

From a passage in a Sienese chronicle we learn what ceremonies of bravery were usual in that city when the new knights understood their duty. It was the year 1326. Messer Francesco Bandinelli was about to be knighted on the morning of Christmas Day. The friends of his house sent peacocks and pheasants by the dozen, and huge pies of marchpane, and game in quantities. Wine, meat, and bread were distributed to the Franciscan and other convents, and a fair and noble court was opened to all comers. Messer Sozzo, father of the novice, went, attended by his guests, to

hear high mass in the cathedral; and there upon the marble pulpit, which the Pisans carved, the ceremony was completed. Tommaso di Nello bore his sword and cap and spurs before him upon horseback. Messer Sozzo girded the sword upon the loins of Messer Francesco, his son aforesaid. Messer Pietro Ridolfi, of Rome, who was the first vicar that came to Siena, and the Duke of Calabria buckled on his right spur. The Captain of the People buckled on his left. The Count Simone da Battifolle then undid his sword and placed it in the hands of Messer Giovanni di Messer Bartolo de' Fibenzi da Rodi, who handed it to Messer Sozzo, the which sword had previously been girded by the father on his son. After this follows a list of the illustrious guests, and an inventory of the presents made to them by Messer Francesco. We find among these 'a robe of silken cloth and gold, skirt, and fur, and cap lined with vair, with a silken cord.' The description of the many costly dresses is minute; but I find no mention of armour. The singers received golden florins, and the players upon instruments 'good store of money.' A certain Salamone was presented with the clothes which the novice doffed before he took the ceremonial bath. The whole catalogue concludes with Messer Francesco's furniture and outfit. This, besides a large wardrobe of rich clothes and furs, contains armour and the trappings for charger and palfrey. The *Corte Bandita*, or open house held upon this occasion, lasted for eight days, and the charges on the Bandinelli estates must have been considerable.

Knights so made were called in Italy *Cavalieri Addobbati*, or *di Corredo*, probably because the expense of costly furniture was borne by them—*addobbo* having become a name for decorative trappings, and *Corredo* for equipment. The latter is still in use for a bride's trousseau. The former has the same Teutonic root as our verb 'to dub.' But the Italians

recognised three other kinds of knights, the *Cavalieri Bagnati*, *Cavalieri di Scudo*, and *Cavalieri d'Arme*. Of the four sorts Sacchetti writes in one of his novels:—‘Knights of the Bath are made with the greatest ceremonies, and it behoves them to be bathed and washed of all impurity. Knights of Equipment are those who take the order with a mantle of dark green and the gilded garland. Knights of the Shield are such as are made knights by commonwealths or princes, or go to investiture armed, and with the casque upon their head. Knights of Arms are those who in the opening of a battle, or upon a foughten field, are dubbed knights.’ These distinctions, however, though concordant with feudal chivalry, were not scrupulously maintained in Italy. Messer Francesco Bandinelli, for example, was certainly a *Cavaliere di Corredo*. Yet he took the bath, as we have seen. Of a truth, the Italians selected those picturesque elements of chivalry which lent themselves to pageant and parade. The sterner intention of the institution, and the symbolic meaning of its various ceremonies, were neglected by them.

In the foregoing passages, which serve as a lengthy preamble to Folgore’s five sonnets, I have endeavoured to draw illustrations from the history of Siena, because Folgore represents Siennese society at the height of mediæval culture. In the first of the series he describes the preparation made by the aspirant after knighthood. The noble youth is so bent on doing honour to the order of chivalry, that he raises money by mortgage to furnish forth the banquets and the presents due upon the occasion of his institution. He has made provision also of equipment for himself and all his train. It will be noticed that Folgore dwells only on the fair and joyous aspect of the ceremony. The religious enthusiasm of knighthood has disappeared, and already, in the first decade of the fourteenth century, we find the spirit

of Jehan de Saintrè prevalent in Italy. The word *donzello*, derived from the Latin *domicellus*, I have translated *squire*, because the donzel was a youth of gentle birth awaiting knighthood.

This morn a young squire shall be made a knight ;
Whereof he fain would be right worthy found,
And therefore pledgeth lands and castles round
To furnish all that fits a man of might.
Meat, bread and wine he gives to many a wight ;
Capons and pheasants on his board abound,
Where serving men and pages march around ;
Choice chambers, torches, and wax candle light.
Barbed steeds, a multitude, are in his thought,
Mailed men at arms and noble company,
Spears, pennants, housing cloths, bells richly wrought.
Musicians following with great barony
And jesters through the land his state have brought,
With dames and damsels whereso rideth he.

The subject having thus been introduced, Folgore treats the ceremonies of investiture by an allegorical method, which is quite consistent with his own preference of images to ideas. Each of the four following sonnets presents a picture to the mind, admirably fitted for artistic handling. We may imagine them to ourselves wrought in arras for a sumptuous chamber. The first treats of the bath, in which, as we have seen already from Sacchetti's note, the aspirant after knighthood puts aside all vice, and consecrates himself anew. Prodezza, or Prowess, must behold him nude from head to foot, in order to assure herself that the neophyte bears no blemish ; and this inspection is an allegory of internal wholeness.

Lo Prowess, who despoileth him straightway,
And saith : ' Friend, now beseems it thee to strip ;
For I will see men naked, thigh and hip,
And thou my will must know and eke obey ;

And leave what was thy wont until this day,
 And for new toil, new sweat, thy strength equip;
 This do, and thou shalt join my fellowship,
 If of fair deeds thou tire not nor cry nay.'
 And when she sees his comely body bare,
 Forthwith within her arms she him doth take,
 And saith: 'These limbs thou yielddest to my prayer;
 I do accept thee, and this gift thee make,
 So that thy deeds may shine for ever fair;
 My lips shall never more thy praise forsake.'

After courage, the next virtue of the knightly character is gentleness or modesty, called by the Italians humility. It is this quality which makes a strong man pleasing to the world, and wins him favour. Folgore's sonnet enables us to understand the motto of the great Borromeo family—*Humilitas*, in Gothic letters underneath the coronet upon their princely palace fronts.

Humility to him doth gently go,
 And saith: 'I would in no wise weary thee;
 Yet must I cleanse and wash thee thoroughly,
 And I will make thee whiter than the snow.
 Hear what I tell thee in few words, for so
 Fain am I of thy heart to hold the key;
 Now must thou sail henceforward after me;
 And I will guide thee as myself do go.
 But one thing would I have thee straightway leave;
 Well knowest thou mine enemy is pride;
 Let her no more unto thy spirit cleave:
 So leal a friend with thee will I abide
 That favour from all folk thou shalt receive;
 This grace hath he who keepeth on my side.'

The novice has now bathed, approved himself to the searching eyes of Prowess, and been accepted by Humility. After the bath, it was customary for him to spend a night in vigil; and this among the Teutons should have taken place in church, alone before the altar. But the Italian poet, after his custom,

gives a suave turn to the severe discipline. His donzel passes the night in bed, attended by Discretion, or the virtue of reflection. She provides fair entertainment for the hours of vigil, and leaves him at the morning with good counsel. It is not for nothing that he seeks knighthood, and it behoves him to be careful of his goings. The last three lines of the sonnet are the gravest of the series, showing that something of true chivalrous feeling survived even among the Cavalieri di Corredo of Tuscany.

Then did Discretion to the squire draw near,
And drieth him with a fair cloth and clean,
And straightway putteth him the sheets between,
Silk, linen, counterpane, and minevere.
Think now of this ! Until the day was clear,
With songs and music and delight the queen,
And with new knights, fair fellows well-beseen,
To make him perfect, gave him goodly cheer.
Then saith she : ' Rise forthwith, for now 'tis due,
Thou shouldst be born into the world again ;
Keep well the order thou dost take in view.'
Unfathomable thoughts with him remain
Of that great bond he may no more eschew,
Nor can he say, ' I'll hide me from this chain.'

The vigil is over. The mind of the novice is prepared for his new duties. The morning of his reception into chivalry has arrived. It is therefore fitting that grave thoughts should be abandoned ; and seeing that not only prowess, humility, and discretion are the virtues of a knight, but that he should also be blithe and debonair, Gladness comes to raise him from his bed and equip him for the ceremony of institution.

Comes Blithesomeness with mirth and merriment,
All decked in flowers she seemeth a rose-tree ;
Of linen, silk, cloth, fur, now beareth she
To the new knight a rich habiliment ;

Head-gear and cap and garland flower-besprent,
 So brave they were May-bloom he seemed to be ;
 With such a rout, so many and such glee,
 That the floor shook. Then to her work she went ;
 And stood him on his feet in hose and shoon ;
 And purse and gilded girdle 'neath the fur
 That drapes his goodly limbs, she buckles on ;
 Then bids the singers and sweet music stir,
 And showeth him to ladies for a boon
 And all who in that following went with her.

At this point the poem is abruptly broken. The manuscript from which these sonnets are taken states they are a fragment. Had the remaining twelve been preserved to us, we should probably have possessed a series of pictures in which the procession to church would have been portrayed, the investiture with the sword, the accolade, the buckling on of the spurs, and the concluding sports and banquets. It is very much to be regretted that so interesting, so beautiful, and so unique a monument of Italian chivalry survives thus mutilated. But students of art have to arm themselves continually with patience, repressing the sad thoughts engendered in them by the spectacle of time's unconscious injuries.

It is certain that Folgore would have written at least one sonnet on the quality of courtesy, which in that age, as we have learned from Matteo Villani, identified itself in the Italian mind with liberality. This identification marks a certain degradation of the chivalrous ideal, which is characteristic of Italian manners. One of Folgore's miscellaneous sonnets shows how sorely he felt the disappearance of this quality from the midst of a society bent daily more and more upon material aims. It reminds us of the lamentable outcries uttered by the later poets of the fourteenth century, Sacchetti, Boccaccio, Uberti, and others of less fame, over the decline of their age.

Courtesy ! Courtesy ! Courtesy ! I call :
 But from no quarter comes there a reply.
 They who should show her, hide her ; wherefore I
 And whoso needs her, ill must us befall.
 Greed with his hook hath ta'en men one and all,
 And murdered every grace that dumb doth lie :
 Whence, if I grieve, I know the reason why ;
 From you, great men, to God I make my call :
 For you my mother Courtesy have cast
 So low beneath your feet she there must bleed ;
 Your gold remains, but you're not made to last :
 Of Eve and Adam we are all the seed :
 Able to give and spend, you hold wealth fast :
 Ill is the nature that rears such a breed !

Folgore was not only a poet of occasion and compliment, but a political writer, who fully entertained the bitter feeling of the Guelphs against their Ghibelline opponents.

Two of his sonnets addressed to the Guelphs have been translated by Mr. Rossetti. In order to complete the list I have made free versions of two others in which he criticised the weakness of his own friends. The first is addressed, in the insolent impiety of rage, to God :—

I praise thee not, O God, nor give thee glory,
 Nor yield thee any thanks, nor bow the knee,
 Nor pay thee service ; for this irketh me
 More than the souls to stand in purgatory ;
 Since thou hast made us Guelphs a jest and story
 Unto the Ghibellines for all to see :
 And if Uguecion claimed tax of thee,
 Thou'dst pay it without interrogatory.
 Ah, well I wot they know thee ! and have stolen
 St. Martin from thee, Altopascio,
 St. Michael, and the treasure thou hast lost ;
 And thou that rotten rabble so hast swollen
 That pride now counts for tribute ; even so
 Thou'st made their heart stone-hard to thine own cost.

About the meaning of some lines in this sonnet I am not clear. But the feeling and the general drift of it are manifest. The second is a satire on the feebleness and effeminacy of the Pisans.

Ye are more silky-sleek than ermines are,
 Ye Pisan counts, knights, damozels, and squires,
 Who think by combing out your hair like wires
 To drive the men of Florence from their car.
 Ye make the Ghibellines free near and far,
 Here, there, in cities, castles, huts, and byres,
 Seeing how gallant in your brave attires,
 How bold you look, true paladins of war.
 Stout-hearted are ye as a hare in chase,
 To meet the sails of Genoa on the sea ;
 And men of Lucca never saw your face.
 Dogs with a bone for courtesy are ye :
 Could Folgore but gain a special grace,
 He'd have you banded 'gainst all men that be.

Among the sonnets not translated by Mr. Rossetti two by Folgore remain, which may be classified with the not least considerable contributions to Italian gnomie poetry in an age when literature easily assumed a didactic tone. The first has for its subject the importance of discernment and discrimination. It is written on the wisdom of what the ancient Greeks called *Kaiρός*, or the right occasion in all human conduct.

Dear friend, not every herb puts forth a flower ;
 Nor every flower that blossoms fruit doth bear ;
 Nor hath each spoken word a virtue rare ;
 Nor every stone in earth its healing power :
 This thing is good when mellow, that when sour ;
 One seems to grieve, within doth rest from care ;
 Not every torch is brave that flaunts in air ;
 There is what dead doth seem, yet flame doth shower.
 Wherefore it ill behoveth a wise man
 His truss of every grass that grows to bind,
 Or pile his back with every stone he can,

Or counsel from each word to seek to find,
 Or take his walks abroad with Dick and Dan :
 Not without cause I'm moved to speak my mind.

The second condemns those men of light impulse who, as Dante put it, discoursing on the same theme, 'subject reason to inclination.'¹

What time desire hath o'er the soul such sway
 That reason finds nor place nor puissance here,
 Men oft do laugh at what should claim a tear,
 And over grievous dole are seeming gay.
 He sure would travel far from sense astray
 Who should take frigid ice for fire ; and near
 Unto this plight are those who make glad cheer
 For what should rather cause their soul dismay.
 But more at heart might he feel heavy pain
 Who made his reason subject to mere will,
 And followed wandering impulse without rein ;
 Seeing no lordship is so rich as still
 One's upright self unswerving to sustain,
 To follow worth, to flee things vain and ill.

The sonnets translated by me in this essay, taken together with those already published by Mr. Rossetti, put the English reader in possession of all that passes for the work of Folgore da San Gemignano.

Since these words were written, England has lost the poet-painter, to complete whose work upon the sonnet-writer of

¹ The line in Dante runs :

'Che la ragion sommettono al talento.'

In Folgore's sonnet we read :

'Chi sommette rason a volontade.'

On the supposition that Folgore wrote in the second decade of the fourteenth century, it is not impossible that he may have had knowledge of this line from the fifth canto of the *Inferno*.

mediæval Siena I attempted the translations in this essay. One who has trodden the same path as Rossetti, at however a noticeable interval, and has attempted to present in English verse the works of great Italian singers, doing inadequately for Michelangelo and Campanella what he did supremely well for Dante, may here perhaps be allowed to lay the tribute of reverent recognition at his tomb.

THOUGHTS IN ITALY ABOUT CHRISTMAS

WHAT is the meaning of our English Christmas? What makes it seem so truly Northern, national, and homely, that we do not like to keep the feast upon a foreign shore? These questions grew upon me as I stood one Advent afternoon beneath the Dome of Florence. A priest was thundering from the pulpit against French scepticism, and exalting the miracle of the Incarnation. Through the whole dim church blazed altar candles. Crowds of men and women knelt or sat about the transepts, murmuring their prayers of preparation for the festival. At the door were pedlars selling little books, in which were printed the offices for Christmas-tide, with stories of S. Felix and S. Catherine, whose devotion to the infant Christ had wrought them weal, and promises of the remission of four purgatorial centuries to those who zealously observed the service of the Church at this most holy time. I knew that the people of Florence were preparing for Christmas in their own way. But it was not our way. It happened that outside the church the climate seemed as wintry as our own—snowstorms and ice, and wind and chilling fog, suggesting Northern cold. But as the palaces of Florence lacked our comfortable firesides, and the greetings of friends lacked our hearty handshakes and loud good wishes, so there seemed to be a want of the home feeling in those Christmas services and customs. Again I asked myself, ‘What do we mean by Christmas?’

The same thought pursued me as I drove to Rome: by

Siena, still and brown, uplifted, mid her russet hills and wilderness of rolling plain; by Chiusi, with its sepulchral city of a dead and unknown people; through the chestnut forests of the Apennines; by Orvieto's rock, Viterbo's fountains, and the oak-grown solitudes of the Ciminian heights, from which one looks across the broad lake of Bolsena and the Roman plain. Brilliant sunlight, like that of a day in late September, shone upon the landscape, and I thought—Can this be Christmas? Are they bringing mistletoe and holly on the country carts into the towns in far-off England? Is it clear and frosty there, with the tramp of heels upon the flag, or snowing silently, or foggy with a round red sun and cries of warning at the corners of the streets?

I reached Rome on Christmas Eve, in time to hear midnight services in the Sistine Chapel and S. John Lateran, to breathe the dust of decayed shrines, to wonder at doting cardinals begrimed with snuff, and to resent the open-mouthed bad taste of my countrymen who made a mockery of these palsy-stricken ceremonies. Nine cardinals going to sleep, nine train-bearers talking scandal, twenty huge, handsome Switzers in the dress devised by Michelangelo, some ushers, a choir caged off by gilded railings, the insolence and eagerness of polyglot tourists, plenty of wax candles dripping on people's heads, and a continual nasal drone proceeding from the gilded cage, out of which were caught at intervals these words, and these only,—‘*Sæcula sæculorum, amen.*’ Such was the celebrated Sistine service. The chapel blazed with light, and very strange did Michelangelo's Last Judgment, his Sibyls, and his Prophets, appear upon the roof and wall above this motley and unmeaning crowd.

Next morning I put on my dress-clothes and white tie, and repaired, with groups of Englishmen similarly attired, and of Englishwomen in black crape—the regulation costume

—to S. Peter's. It was a glorious and cloudless morning; sunbeams streamed in columns from the southern windows, falling on the vast space full of soldiers and a mingled mass of every kind of people. Up the nave stood double files of the Pontifical guard. Monks and nuns mixed with the Swiss cuirassiers and halberds. Contadini crowded round the sacred images, and especially round the toe of S. Peter. I saw many mothers lift their swaddled babies up to kiss it. Valets of cardinals, with the invariable red umbrellas, hung about side chapels and sacristies. Purple-mantled monsignori, like emperor butterflies, floated down the aisles from sunlight into shadow. Movement, colour, and the stir of expectation, made the church alive. We showed our dress-clothes to the guard, were admitted within their ranks, and solemnly walked up toward the dome. There under its broad canopy stood the altar, glittering with gold and candles. The choir was carpeted and hung with scarlet. Two magnificent thrones rose ready for the Pope: guards of honour, soldiers, attachés, and the élite of the residents and visitors in Rome, were scattered in groups picturesquely varied by ecclesiastics of all orders and degrees. At ten a stirring took place near the great west door. It opened, and we saw the procession of the Pope and his cardinals. Before him marched the singers and the blowers of the silver trumpets, making the most liquid melody. Then came his Cap of Maintenance, and three tiaras; then a company of mitred priests; next the cardinals in scarlet; and last, aloft beneath a canopy, upon the shoulders of men, and flanked by the mystic fans, advanced the Pope himself, swaying to and fro like a Lama, or an Aztec king. Still the trumpets blew most silverly, and still the people knelt; and as he came, we knelt and had his blessing. Then he took his state and received homage. After this the choir began to sing a mass of Palestrina's, and the

deacons robed the Pope. Marvellous putting on and taking off of robes and tiaras and mitres ensued, during which there was much bowing and praying and burning of incense. At last, when he had reached the highest stage of sacrificial sanctity, he proceeded to the altar, waited on by cardinals and bishops. Having censed it carefully, he took a higher throne and divested himself of part of his robes. Then the mass went on in earnest, till the moment of consecration, when it paused, the Pope descended from his throne, passed down the choir, and reached the altar. Every one knelt; the shrill bell tinkled; the silver trumpets blew; the air became sick and heavy with incense, so that sun and candle light swooned in an atmosphere of odorous cloud-wreaths. The whole church trembled, hearing the strange subtle music vibrate in the dome, and seeing the Pope with his own hands lift Christ's body from the altar and present it to the people. An old parish priest, pilgrim from some valley of the Apennines, who knelt beside me, cried and quivered with excess of adoration. The great tombs around, the sculptured saints and angels, the dome, the volumes of light and incense and unfamiliar melody, the hierarchy ministrant, the white and central figure of the Pope, the multitude—made up an overpowering scene. What followed was comparatively tedious. My mind again went back to England, and I thought of Christmas services beginning in all village churches and all cathedrals throughout the land—their old familiar hymn, their anthem of Handel, their trite and sleepy sermons. How different the two feasts are—Christmas in Rome, Christmas in England—Italy and the North—the spirit of Latin and the spirit of Teutonic Christianity.

What, then, constitutes the essence of our Christmas as different from that of more Southern nations? In their origin they are the same. The stable of Bethlehem, the

star-led kings, the shepherds, and the angels—all the beautiful story, in fact, which S. Luke alone of the Evangelists has preserved for us—are what the whole Christian world owes to the religious feeling of the Hebrews. The first and second chapters of S. Luke are most important in the history of Christian mythology and art. They are far from containing the whole of what we mean by Christmas; but the religious poetry which gathers round that season must be sought upon their pages. Angels, ever since the Exodus, played a first part in the visions of the Hebrew prophets and in the lives of their heroes. We know not what reminiscences of old Egyptian genii, what strange shadows of the winged beasts of Persia, flitted through their dreams. In the desert, or under the boundless sky of Babylon, these shapes became no less distinct than the precise outlines of Oriental scenery. They incarnated the vivid thoughts and intense longings of the prophets, who gradually came to give them human forms and titles. We hear of them by name, as servants and attendants upon God, as guardians of nations, and patrons of great men. To the Hebrew mind the whole unseen world was full of spirits, active, strong, and swift of flight, of various aspect, and with power of speech. It is hard to imagine what the first Jewish disciples and the early Greek and Roman converts thought of these great beings. To us, the hierarchies of Dionysius, the services of the Church, the poetry of Dante and Milton, and the forms of art, have made them quite familiar. Northern nations have appropriated the Angels, and invested them with attributes alien to their Oriental origin. They fly through our pine-forests, and the gloom of cloud or storm; they ride upon our clanging bells, and gather in swift squadrons among the arches of Gothic cathedrals; we see them making light in the cavernous depth of woods, where sun or moon beams rarely pierce, and ministering

to the wounded or the weary ; they bear aloft the censers of the mass ; they sing in the anthems of choristers, and live in strains of poetry and music ; our churches bear their names ; we call our children by their titles ; we love them as our guardians, and the whole unseen world is made a home to us by their imagined presence. All these things are the growth of time and the work of races whose myth-making imagination is more artistic than that of the Hebrews. Yet this rich legacy of romance is bound up in the second chapter of S. Luke ; and it is to him we must give thanks when at Christmas-tide we read of the shepherds and the angels in English words more beautiful than his own Greek.

The angels in the stable of Bethlehem, the kings who came from the far East, and the adoring shepherds, are the gift of Hebrew legend and of the Greek physician Luke to Christmas. How these strange and splendid incidents affect modern fancy remains for us to examine ; at present we must ask, What did the Romans give to Christmas ? The customs of the Christian religion, like everything that belongs to the modern world, have nothing pure and simple in their nature. They are the growth of long ages, and of widely different systems, parts of which have been fused into one living whole. In this respect they resemble our language, our blood, our literature, and our modes of thought and feeling. We find Christianity in one sense wholly original ; in another sense composed of old materials ; in both senses universal and cosmopolitan. The Roman element in Christmas is a remarkable instance of this acquisitive power of Christianity. The celebration of the festival takes place at the same time as that of the Pagan Saturnalia ; and from the old customs of that holiday, Christmas absorbed much that was consistent with the spirit of the new religion. During the Saturnalia the world enjoyed, in thought at least, a perfect freedom. Men who had gone to bed as

slaves, rose their own masters. From the *ergastula* and dismal sunless cages they went forth to ramble in the streets and fields. Liberty of speech was given them, and they might satirise those vices of their lords to which, on other days, they had to minister. Rome on this day, by a strange negation of logic, which we might almost call a prompting of blind conscience, negated the philosophic dictum that barbarians were by law of nature slaves, and acknowledged the higher principle of equality. The Saturnalia stood out from the whole year as a protest in favour of universal brotherhood, and the right that all men share alike to enjoy life after their own fashion, within the bounds that nature has assigned them. We do not know how far the Stoic school, which was so strong in Rome, and had so many points of contact with the Christians, may have connected its own theories of equality with this old custom of the Saturnalia. But it is possible that the fellowship of human beings, and the temporary abandonment of class prerogatives, became a part of Christmas through the habit of the Saturnalia. We are perhaps practising a Roman virtue to this day when at Christmas-time our hand is liberal, and we think it wrong that the poorest wretch should fail to feel the pleasure of the day.

Of course Christianity inspired the freedom of the Saturnalia with a higher meaning. The mystery of the Incarnation, or the deification of human nature, put an end to slavery through all the year, as well as on this single day. What had been a kind of aimless licence became the most ennobling principle by which men are exalted to a state of self-respect and mutual reverence. Still in the Saturnalia was found, ready-made, an easy symbol of unselfish enjoyment. It is, however, dangerous to push speculations of this kind to the very verge of possibility.

The early Roman Christians probably kept Christmas with

no special ceremonies. Christ was as yet too close to them. He had not become the glorious creature of their fancy, but was partly an historic being, partly confused in their imagination with reminiscences of Pagan deities. As the Good Shepherd, and as Orpheus, we find him painted in the Catacombs; and those who thought of him as God, loved to dwell upon his risen greatness more than on the idyll of his birth. To them his entry upon earth seemed less a subject of rejoicing than his opening of the heavens; they suffered, and looked forward to a future happiness; they would not seem to make this world permanent by sharing its gladness with the Heathens. Theirs, in truth, was a religion of hope and patience, not of triumphant recollection or of present joyfulness.

The Northern converts of the early Church added more to the peculiar character of our Christmas. Who can tell what Pagan rites were half sanctified by their association with that season, or how much of our cheerfulness belonged to Heathen orgies and the banquets of grim warlike gods? Certainly nothing strikes one more in reading Scandinavian poetry, than the strange mixture of Pagan and Christian sentiments which it presents. For though the missionaries of the Church did all they could to wean away the minds of men from their old superstitions; yet, wiser than their modern followers, they saw that some things might remain untouched, and that even the great outlines of the Christian faith might be adapted to the habits of the people whom they studied to convert. Thus, on the one hand, they destroyed the old temples one by one, and called the idols by the name of devils, and strove to obliterate the songs which sang great deeds of bloody gods and heroes; while, on the other, they taught the Northern sea-kings that Jesus was a Prince surrounded by twelve dukes, who conquered all the world.

Besides, they left the days of the week to their old patrons. It is certain that the imagination of the people preserved more of heathendom than even such missionaries could approve ; mixing up the deeds of the Christian saints with old heroic legends ; seeing Balder's beauty in Christ and the strength of Thor in Samson ; attributing magic to S. John ; swearing, as of old, bloody oaths in God's name, over the gilded boar's-head ; burning the yule-log, and cutting sacred boughs to grace their new-built churches.

The songs of choirs and sound of holy bells, and superstitious reverence for the mass, began to tell upon the people ; and soon the echo of their old religion only swelled upon the ear at intervals, attaching itself to times of more than usual sanctity. Christmas was one of these times, and the old faith threw around its celebration a fantastic light. Many customs of the genial Pagan life remained ; they seemed harmless when the sense of joy was Christian. The Druid's mistletoe graced the church porches of England and of France, and no blood lingered on its berries. Christmas thus became a time of extraordinary mystery. The people loved it as connecting their old life with the new religion, perhaps unconsciously, though every one might feel that Christmas was no common Christian feast. On its eve strange wonders happened : the thorn that sprang at Glastonbury from the sacred crown which Joseph brought with him from Palestine, when Avalon was still an island, blossomed on that day. The Cornish miners seemed to hear the sound of singing men arise from submerged churches by the shore, and others said that bells, beneath the ground where villages had been, chimed yearly on that eve. No evil thing had power, as Marcellus in 'Hamlet' tells us, and the bird of dawning crowed the whole night through. One might multiply folklore about the sanctity of Christmas, but enough has been said

to show that round it lingered long the legendary spirit of old Paganism. It is not to Jews, or Greeks, or Romans only that we owe our ancient Christmas fancies, but also to those half-heathen ancestors who lovingly looked back to Odin's days, and held the old while they embraced the new.

Let us imagine Christmas Day in a mediæval town of Northern England. The cathedral is only partly finished. Its nave and transepts are the work of Norman architects, but the choir has been destroyed in order to be rebuilt by more graceful designers and more skilful hands. The old city is full of craftsmen, assembled to complete the church. Some have come as a religious duty, to work off their tale of sins by bodily labour. Some are animated by a love of art—simple men, who might have rivalled with the Greeks in ages of more cultivation. Others, again, are well-known carvers, brought for hire from distant towns and countries beyond the sea. But to-day, and for some days past, the sound of hammer and chisel has been silent in the choir. Monks have bustled about the nave, dressing it up with holly-boughs and bushes of yew, and preparing a stage for the sacred play they are going to exhibit on the feast day. Christmas is not like Corpus Christi, and now the market-place stands inches deep in snow, so that the Miracles must be enacted beneath a roof instead of in the open air. And what place so appropriate as the cathedral, where poor people may have warmth and shelter while they see the show? Besides, the gloomy old church, with its windows darkened by the falling snow, lends itself to candlelight effects that will enhance the splendour of the scene. Everything is ready. The incense of morning mass yet lingers round the altar. The voice of the friar who told the people from the pulpit the story of Christ's birth, has hardly ceased to echo. Time has just been given for a mid-day dinner, and for the shepherds and

farm lads to troop in from the country-side. The monks are ready at the wooden stage to draw its curtain, and all the nave is full of eager faces. There you may see the smith and carpenter, the butcher's wife, the country priest, and the grey cowed friar. Scores of workmen, whose home the cathedral for the time is made, are also here, and you may know the artists by their thoughtful foreheads and keen eyes. That young monk carved Madonna and her Son above the southern porch. Beside him stands the master mason, whose strong arms have hewn gigantic images of prophets and apostles for the pinnacles outside the choir; and the little man with cunning eyes between the two is he who cuts such quaint hobgoblins for the gargoyles. He has a vein of satire in him, and his humour overflows into the stone. Many and many a grim beast and hideous head has he hidden among vine-leaves and trellis-work upon the porches. Those who know him well are loth to anger him, for fear their sons and sons' sons should laugh at them for ever caricatured in solid stone.

Hark! there sounds the bell. The curtain is drawn, and the candles blaze brightly round the wooden stage. What is this first scene? We have God in Heaven, dressed like a Pope with triple crown, and attended by his court of angels. They sing and toss up censers till he lifts his hand and speaks. In a long Latin speech he unfolds the order of creation and his will concerning man. At the end of it up leaps an ugly buffoon, in goatskin, with rams' horns upon his head. Some children begin to cry; but the older people laugh, for this is the Devil, the clown and comic character, who talks their common tongue, and has no reverence before the very throne of Heaven. He asks leave to plague men, and receives it; then, with many a curious caper, he goes down to Hell, beneath the stage. The angels sing and toss their censers as before, and the first scene closes to a sound of

organs. The next is more conventional, in spite of some grotesque incidents. It represents the Fall; the monks hurry over it quickly, as a tedious but necessary prelude to the birth of Christ. That is the true Christmas part of the ceremony, and it is understood that the best actors and most beautiful dresses are to be reserved for it. The builders of the choir in particular are interested in the coming scenes, since one of their number has been chosen, for his handsome face and tenor voice, to sing the angel's part. He is a young fellow of nineteen, but his beard is not yet grown, and long hair hangs down upon his shoulders. A chorister of the cathedral, his younger brother, will act the Virgin Mary. At last the curtain is drawn.

We see a cottage-room, dimly lighted by a lamp, and Mary spinning near her bedside. She sings a country air, and goes on working, till a rustling noise is heard, more light is thrown upon the stage, and a glorious creature, in white raiment, with broad golden wings, appears. He bears a lily, and cries,—‘Ave Maria, Gratia Plena!’ She does not answer, but stands confused, with down-dropped eyes and timid mien. Gabriel rises from the ground and comforts her, and sings aloud his message of glad tidings. Then Mary gathers courage, and, kneeling in her turn, thanks God; and when the angel and his radiance disappears, she sings the song of the Magnificat, clearly and simply, in the darkened room. Very soft and silver sounds this hymn through the great church. The women kneel, and children are hushed as by a lullaby. But some of the hinds and ’prentice lads begin to think it rather dull. They are not sorry when the next scene opens with a sheepfold and a little camp-fire. Unmistakable bleatings issue from the fold, and five or six common fellows are sitting round the blazing wood. One might fancy they had stepped straight from the church floor to the stage, so natural

do they look. Besides, they call themselves by common names—Colin, and Tom Lie-a-bed, and nimble Dick. Many a round laugh wakes echoes in the church when these shepherds stand up, and hold debate about a stolen sheep. Tom Lie-a-bed has nothing to remark but that he is very sleepy, and does not want to go in search of it to-night ; Colin cuts jokes, and throws out shrewd suspicions that Dick knows something of the matter ; but Dick is sly, and keeps them off the scent, although a few of his asides reveal to the audience that he is the real thief. While they are thus talking, silence falls upon the shepherds. Soft music from the church organ breathes, and they appear to fall asleep.

The stage is now quite dark, and for a few moments the aisles echo only to the dying melody. When, behold, a ray of light is seen, and splendour grows around the stage from hidden candles, and in the glory Gabriel appears upon a higher platform made to look like clouds. The shepherds wake in confusion, striving to shelter their eyes from this unwonted brilliancy. But Gabriel waves his lily, spreads his great gold wings, and bids good cheer with clarion voice. The shepherds fall to worship, and suddenly round Gabriel there gathers a choir of angels, and a song of ' Gloria in Excelsis ' to the sound of a deep organ is heard far off. From distant aisles it swells, and seems to come from heaven. Through a long resonant fugue the glory flies, and as it ceases with complex conclusion, the lights die out, the angels disappear, and Gabriel fades into the darkness. Still the shepherds kneel, rustically chanting a carol half in Latin, half in English, which begins ' In dulci Jubilo.' The people know it well, and when the chorus rises with ' Ubi sunt gaudia ? ' its wild melody is caught by voices up and down the nave. This scene makes deep impression upon many hearts ; for the beauty of Gabriel is rare, and few who see him in his angel's dress

would know him for the lad who daily carves his lilies and broad water-flags about the pillars of the choir. To that simple audience he interprets Heaven, and little children will see him in their dreams. Dark winter nights and awful forests will be trodden by his feet, made musical by his melodious voice, and parted by the rustling of his wings. The youth himself may return to-morrow to the workman's blouse and chisel, but his memory lives in many minds and may form a part of Christmas for the fancy of men as yet unborn.

The next drawing of the curtain shows us the stable of Bethlehem crowned by its star. There kneels Mary, and Joseph leans upon his staff. The ox and ass are close at hand, and Jesus lies in jewelled robes on straw within the manger. To right and left bow the shepherds, worshipping in dumb show, while voices from behind chant a solemn hymn. In the midst of the melody is heard a flourish of trumpets, and heralds step upon the stage, followed by the three crowned kings. They have come from the far East, led by the star. The song ceases, while drums and fifes and trumpets play a stately march. The kings pass by, and do obeisance one by one. Each gives some costly gift; each doffs his crown and leaves it at the Saviour's feet. Then they retire to a distance and worship in silence like the shepherds. Again the angel's song is heard, and while it dies away the curtain closes, and the lights are put out.

The play is over, and evening has come. The people must go from the warm church into the frozen snow, and crunch their homeward way beneath the moon. But in their minds they carry a sense of light and music and unearthly loveliness. Not a scene of this day's pageant will be lost. It grows within them and creates the poetry of Christmas. Nor must we forget the sculptors who listen to the play. We spoke of them minutely, because these mysteries sank deep into their

souls and found a way into their carvings on the cathedral walls. The monk who made Madonna by the southern porch, will remember Gabriel, and place him bending low in lordly salutation by her side. The painted glass of the chapter-house will glow with fiery choirs of angels learned by heart that night. And who does not know the mocking devils and quaint satyrs that the humorous sculptor will carve among his fruits and flowers? Some of the misereres of the stalls still bear portraits of the shepherd thief, and of the ox and ass who blinked so blindly when the kings, by torchlight, brought their dazzling gifts. Truly these old miracle-plays, and the carved work of cunning hands that they inspired, are worth to us more than all the delicate creations of Italian pencils. Our homely Northern churches still retain, for the child who reads their bosses and their sculptured fronts, more Christmas poetry than we can find in Fra Angelico's devoutness or the liveliness of Giotto. Not that Southern artists have done nothing for our Christmas. Cimabue's gigantic angels at Assisi, and the radiant seraphs of Raphael or of Signorelli, were seen by Milton in his Italian journey. He gazed in Romish churches on graceful Nativities, into which Angelico and Credi threw their simple souls. How much they tinged his fancy we cannot say. But what we know of heavenly hierarchies we later men have learned from Milton; and what he saw he spoke, and what he spoke in sounding verse lives for us now and sways our reason, and controls our fancy, and makes fine art of high theology.

Thus have I attempted rudely to recall a scene of mediæval Christmas. To understand the domestic habits of that age is not so easy, though one can fancy how the barons in their halls held Christmas, with the boar's head and the jester and the great yule-log. On the dais sat lord and lady, waited on by knight and squire and page; but down the long

hall feasted yeomen and hinds and men-at-arms. Little remains to us of those days, and we have outworn their jollity. It is really from the Elizabethan poets that our sense of old-fashioned festivity arises. They lived at the end of one age and the beginning of another. Though born to inaugurate the new era, they belonged by right of association and sympathy to the period that was fleeting fast away. This enabled them to represent the poetry of past and present. Old customs and old states of feeling, when they are about to perish, pass into the realm of art. For art is like a flower, which consummates the plant and ends its growth, while it translates its nature into loveliness. Thus Dante and Lorenzetti and Orcagna enshrined mediæval theology in works of imperishable beauty, and Shakspeare and his fellows made immortal the life and manners that were decaying in their own time. Men do not reflect upon their mode of living till they are passing from one state to another, and the consciousness of art implies a beginning of new things. Let one who wishes to appreciate the ideal of an English Christmas read Shakspeare's song, 'When icicles hang by the wall;' and if he knows some old grey grange, far from the high-road, among pastures, with a river flowing near, and cawing rooks in elm-trees by the garden-wall, let him place Dick and Joan and Marian there.

We have heard so much of pensioners, and barons of beef, and yule-logs, and bay, and rosemary, and holly boughs cut upon the hillside, and crab-apples bobbing in the wassail bowl, and masques and mummers, and dancers on the rushes, that we need not here describe a Christmas Eve in olden times. Indeed, this last half of the nineteenth century is weary of the worn-out theme. But one characteristic of the age of Elizabeth may be mentioned: that is its love of music. Fugued melodies, sung by voices without instruments, were

much in vogue. We call them madrigals, and their half-merry, half-melancholy music yet recalls the time when England had her gift of art, when she needed not to borrow of Marenzio and Palestrina, when her Wilbyes and her Morlands and her Dowlands won the praise of Shakspeare and the court. We hear the echo of those songs; and in some towns at Christmas or the New Year old madrigals still sound in praise of Oriana and of Phyllis and the country life. What are called 'waits' are but a poor travesty of those well-sung Elizabethan carols. We turn in our beds half pitying, half angered by harsh voices that quaver senseless ditties in the fog, or by tuneless fiddles playing popular airs without propriety or interest.

It is a strange mixture of picturesquely blended elements which the Elizabethan age presents. We see it afar off like the meeting of a hundred streams that grow into a river. We are sailing on the flood long after it has shrunk into a single tide, and the banks are dull and tame, and the all-absorbing ocean is before us. Yet sometimes we hear a murmur of the distant fountains, and Christmas is a day on which for some the many waters of the age of great Elizabeth sound clearest.

The age which followed was not poetical. The Puritans restrained festivity and art, and hated music. Yet from this period stands out the hymn of Milton, written when he was a youth, but bearing promise of his later muse. At one time, as we read it, we seem to be looking on a picture by some old Italian artist. But no picture can give Milton's music or make the 'base of heaven's deep organ blow.' Here he touches new associations, and reveals the realm of poetry which it remains for later times to traverse. Milton felt the true sentiment of Northern Christmas when he opened his poem with the 'winter wild,' in defiance of historical probability,

and what the French call local colouring. Nothing shows how wholly we people of the North have appropriated Christmas, and made it a creature of our own imagination, more than this dwelling on winds and snows and bitter frosts, so alien from the fragrant nights of Palestine. But Milton's hymn is like a symphony, embracing many thoughts and periods of varying melody. The music of the seraphim brings to his mind the age of gold, and that suggests the judgment and the redemption of the world. Satan's kingdom fails, the false gods go forth, Apollo leaves his rocky throne, and all the dim Phœnician and Egyptian deities, with those that classic fancy fabled, troop away like ghosts into the darkness. What a swell of stormy sound is in those lines! It recalls the very voice of Pan, which went abroad upon the waters when Christ died, and all the utterances of God on earth, feigned in Delphian shrines, or truly spoken on the sacred hills, were mute for ever.

After Milton came the age which, of all others, is the prosiest in our history. We cannot find much novelty of interest added to Christmas at this time. But there is one piece of poetry that somehow or another seems to belong to the reign of Anne and of the Georges—the poetry of bells. Great civic corporations reigned in those days; churchwardens tyrannised and were rich; and many a goodly chime of bells they hung in our old church-steeple. Let us go into the square room of the belfry, where the clock ticks all day, and the long ropes hang dangling down, with fur upon their hemp for ringers' hands above the socket set for ringers' feet. There we may read long lists of gilded names, recording mountainous bob-majors, rung a century ago, with special praise to him who pulled the tenor-bell, year after year, until he died, and left it to his son. The art of bell-ringing is profound, and requires a long apprenticeship. Even now, in some old cities,

the ringers form a guild and mystery. Suppose it to be Christmas Eve in the year 1772. It is now a quarter before twelve, and the sexton has unlocked the church-gates and set the belfry door ajar. Candles are lighted in the room above, and jugs of beer stand ready for the ringers. Up they bustle one by one, and listen to the tickings of the clock that tells the passing minutes. At last it gives a click ; and now they throw off coat and waistcoat, strap their girdles tighter round the waist, and each holds his rope in readiness. Twelve o'clock strikes, and forth across the silent city go the clamorous chimes. The steeple rocks and reels, and far away the night is startled. Damp turbulent west winds, rushing from the distant sea, and swirling up the inland valleys, catch the sound, and toss it to and fro, and bear it by gusts and snatches to watchers far away, upon bleak moorlands and the brows of woody hills. Is there not something dim and strange in the thought of these eight men meeting, in the heart of a great city, in the narrow belfry-room, to stir a mighty sound that shall announce to listening ears miles, miles away, the birth of a new day, and tell to dancers, mourners, students, sleepers, and perhaps to dying men, that Christ is born ?

Let this association suffice for the time. And of our own Christmas so much has been said and sung by better voices, that we may leave it to the feelings and the memories of those who read the fireside tales of Dickens, and are happy in their homes. The many elements which I have endeavoured to recall, mix all of them in the Christmas of the present, partly, no doubt, under the form of vague and obscure sentiment ; partly as time-honoured reminiscences, partly as a portion of our own life. But there is one phase of poetry which we enjoy more fully than any previous age. That is music. Music is of all the arts the youngest, and of all can free herself

most readily from symbols. A fine piece of music moves before us like a living passion, which needs no form or colour, no interpreting associations, to convey its strong but indistinct significance. Each man there finds his soul revealed to him, and enabled to assume a cast of feeling in obedience to the changeful sound. In this manner all our Christmas thoughts and emotions have been gathered up for us by Handel in his drama of the 'Messiah.' To Englishmen it is almost as well known and necessary as the Bible. But only one who has heard its pastoral episode performed year after year from childhood in the hushed cathedral, where pendent lamps or sconces make the gloom of aisle and choir and airy column half intelligible, can invest this music with long associations of accumulated awe. To his mind it brings a scene at midnight of hills clear in the starlight of the East, with white flocks scattered on the down. The breath of winds that come and go, the bleating of the sheep, with now and then a tinkling bell, and now and then the voice of an awakened shepherd, is all that breaks the deep repose. Overhead shimmer the bright stars, and low to west lies the moon, not pale and sickly (he dreams) as in our North, but golden, full, and bathing distant towers and tall aërial palms with floods of light. Such is a child's vision, begotten by the music of the symphony; and when he wakes from trance at its low silver close, the dark cathedral seems glowing with a thousand angel faces, and all the air is tremulous with angel wings. Then follow the solitary treble voice and the swift chorus.

SIENA

AFTER leaving the valley of the Arno at Empoli, the railway enters a country which rises into earthy hills of no great height, and spreads out at intervals into broad tracts of cultivated lowland. Geologically speaking, this portion of Tuscany consists of loam and sandy deposits, forming the basin between two mountain-ranges—the Apennines and the chalk hills of the western coast of Central Italy. Seen from the eminence of some old Tuscan turret, this champaign country has a stern and arid aspect. The earth is grey and dusty, the forms of hill and valley are austere and monotonous; even the vegetation seems to sympathise with the uninteresting soil from which it springs. A few spare olives cast their shadows on the lower slopes; here and there a copse of oakwood and acacia marks the course of some small rivulet; rye-fields, grey beneath the wind, clothe the hillsides with scanty verdure. Every knoll is crowned with a village—brown roofs and white house-fronts clustered together on the edge of cliffs, and rising into the campanile or antique tower, which tells so many stories of bygone wars and decayed civilisations.

Beneath these villages stand groups of stone pines clearly visible upon the naked country, cypresses like spires beside the square white walls of convent or of villa, patches of dark foliage, showing where the ilex and the laurel and the myrtle hide thick tangles of rose-trees and jessamines in ancient gardens. Nothing can exceed the barren aspect of this

country in midwinter: it resembles an exaggerated Sussex, without verdure to relieve the rolling lines of down, and hill, and valley; beautiful yet, by reason of its frequent villages and lucid air and infinitely subtle curves of mountain-ridges. But when spring comes, a light and beauty break upon this gloomy soil; the whole is covered with a delicate green veil of rising crops and fresh foliage, and the immense distances which may be seen from every height are blue with cloud-shadows, or rosy in the light of sunset.

Of all the towns of Lower Tuscany, none is more celebrated than Siena. It stands in the very centre of the district which I have attempted to describe, crowning one of its most considerable heights, and commanding one of its most extensive plains. As a city it is a typical representative of those numerous Italian towns, whose origin is buried in remote antiquity, which have formed the seat of three civilisations, and which still maintain a vigorous vitality upon their ancient soil. Its site is Etruscan, its name is Roman, but the town itself owes all its interest and beauty to the artists and the statesmen and the warriors of the middle ages. A single glance at Siena from one of the slopes on the northern side, will show how truly mediæval is its character. A city wall follows the outline of the hill, from which the towers of the cathedral and the palace, with other cupolas and red-brick campanili, spring; while cypresses and olive-gardens stretch downwards to the plain. There is not a single Palladian façade or Renaissance portico to interrupt the unity of the effect. Over all, in the distance, rises Monte Amiata melting imperceptibly into sky and plain.

The three most striking objects of interest in Siena maintain the character of mediæval individuality by which the town is marked. They are the public palace, the cathedral, and the house of S. Catherine. The civil life, the arts, and

the religious tendencies of Italy during the ascendancy of mediæval ideas, are strongly set before us here. High above every other building in the town soars the straight brick tower of the Palazzo Pubblico, the house of the republic, the hearth of civil life within the State. It guards an irregular Gothic building in which the old government of Siena used to be assembled, but which has now for a long time been converted into prisons, courts of law, and showrooms. Let us enter one chamber of the Palazzo—the Sala della Pace, where Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the greatest, perhaps, of Sienese painters, represented the evils of lawlessness and tyranny, and the benefits of peace and justice, in three noble allegories. They were executed early in the fourteenth century, in the age of allegories and symbolism, when poets and painters strove to personify in human shape all thoughts and sentiments. The first great fresco represents Peace—the peace of the Republic of Siena. Ambrogio has painted the twenty-four councillors who formed the Government, standing beneath the thrones of Concord, Justice, and Wisdom. From these controlling powers they stretch in a long double line to a seated figure, gigantic in size, and robed with the ensigns of baronial sovereignty. This figure is the State and Majesty of Siena.¹ Around him sit Peace, Fortitude, and Prudence,

¹ It is probable that the firm Ghibelline sympathies of the Sienese people for the Empire were allegorised in this figure; so that the fresco represented by form and colour what Dante had expressed in his treatise 'De Monarchiâ.' Among the virtues who attend him, Peace distinguishes herself by rare and very remarkable beauty. She is dressed in white and crowned with olive; the folds of her drapery, clinging to the delicately modelled limbs beneath, irresistibly suggest a classic statue. So again does the monumental pose of her dignified, reclining, and yet languid figure. It seems not unreasonable to believe that Lorenzetti copied Peace from the antique Venus which belonged to the Sienese, and which in a fit of superstitious malice they subsequently destroyed and buried in Florentine soil.

Temperance, Magnanimity, and Justice, inalienable assessors of a powerful and righteous lord. Faith, Hope, and Charity, the Christian virtues, float like angels in the air above. Armed horsemen guard his throne, and captives show that he has laid his enemy beneath his feet. Thus the mediæval artist expressed, by painting, his theory of government. The rulers of the State are subordinate to the State itself; they stand between the State and the great animating principles of wisdom, justice, and concord, incarnating the one, and receiving inspiration from the others. The pagan qualities of prudence, magnanimity, and courage give stability and greatness to good government, while the spirit of Christianity must harmonise and rule the whole. Arms, too, are needful to maintain by force what right and law demand, and victory in a just quarrel proclaims the power and vigour of the commonwealth. On another wall Ambrogio has depicted the prosperous city of Siena, girt by battlements and moat, with tower and barbican and drawbridge, to insure its peace. Through the gates stream country-people, bringing the produce of their farms into the town. The streets are crowded with men and women intent on business or pleasure; craftsmen at their trade, merchants with laden mules, a hawking party, hunters scouring the plain, girls dancing, and children playing in the open square. A school-master watching his class, together with the sculptured figures of Geometry, Astronomy, and Philosophy, remind us that education and science flourish under the dominion of well-balanced laws. The third fresco exhibits the reverse of this fair spectacle. Here Tyranny presides over a scene of anarchy and wrong. He is a hideous monster, compounded of all the bestial attributes which indicate force, treason, lechery, and fear. Avarice and Fraud and Cruelty and War and Fury sit around him. At his feet lies Justice, and

above are the effigies of Nero, Caracalla, and like monsters of ill-regulated power. Not far from the castle of Tyranny we see the same town as in the other fresco ; but its streets are filled with scenes of quarrel, theft, and bloodshed. Nor are these allegories merely fanciful. In the middle ages the same city might more than once during one lifetime present in the vivid colours of reality the two contrasted pictures.¹

Quitting the Palazzo, and threading narrow streets, paved with brick and overshadowed with huge empty palaces, we reach the highest of the three hills on which Siena stands, and see before us the Duomo. This church is the most purely Gothic of all Italian cathedrals designed by national architects. Together with that of Orvieto, it stands to show what the unassisted genius of the Italians could produce, when under the empire of mediæval Christianity and before the advent of the neopagan spirit. It is built wholly of marble, and overlaid, inside and out, with florid ornaments of exquisite beauty. There are no flying buttresses, no pinnacles, no deep and fretted doorways, such as form the charm of French and English architecture ; but instead of this, the lines of parti-coloured marbles, the scrolls and wreaths of foliage, the mosaics and the frescoes which meet the eye in every direction, satisfy our sense of variety, producing most agreeable combinations of blending hues and harmoniously connected forms. The chief fault which offends against our Northern taste is the predominance of horizontal lines, both in the

¹ Siena, of all Italian cities, was most subject to revolutions. Comines describes it as a city which 'se gouverne plus follement que ville d'Italie.' Varchi calls it 'un guazzabuglio ed una confusione di repubbliche piuttosto che bene ordinata e instituta repubblica.' See my 'Age of the Despots' (*Renaissance in Italy*, Part I.), pp. 141, 554, for some account of the Sieneſe constitution, and of the feuds and reconciliations of the burghers.

construction of the façade, and also in the internal decoration. This single fact sufficiently proves that the Italians had never seized the true idea of Gothic or aspiring architecture. But, allowing for this original defect, we feel that the Cathedral of Siena combines solemnity and splendour to a degree almost unrivalled. Its dome is another point in which the instinct of Italian architects has led them to adhere to the genius of their ancestral art rather than to follow the principles of Gothic design. The dome is Etruscan and Roman, native to the soil, and only by a kind of violence adapted to the character of pointed architecture. Yet the builders of Siena have shown what a glorious element of beauty might have been added to our Northern cathedrals, had the idea of infinity which our ancestors expressed by long continuous lines, by complexities of interwoven aisles, and by multitudinous aspiring pinnacles, been carried out into vast spaces of ærial cupolas, completing and embracing and covering the whole like heaven. The Duomo, as it now stands, forms only part of a vast design. On entering we are amazed to hear that this church, which looks so large, from the beauty of its proportions, the intricacy of its ornaments, and the interlacing of its columns, is but the transept of the intended building lengthened a little, and surmounted by a cupola and campanile.¹ Yet such is the fact. Soon after its commencement a plague swept over Italy, nearly depopulated Siena, and reduced the town to penury for want of men. The cathedral, which, had it been accomplished, would have surpassed all Gothic churches south of the Alps, remained a ruin. A fragment of the nave still stands, enabling us to judge of its extent. The eastern wall

¹ The present church was begun about 1229. In 1321 the burghers fancied it was too small for the fame and splendour of their city. So they decreed a new *ecclesia pulcra, magna, et magnifica*, for which the older but as yet unfinished building was to be the transept.

joins what was to have been the transept, measuring the mighty space which would have been enclosed by marble vaults and columns delicately wrought. The sculpture on the eastern door shows with what magnificence the Sienese designed to ornament this portion of their temple ; while the southern façade rears itself aloft above the town, like those high arches which testify to the past splendour of Glastonbury Abbey ; but the sun streams through the broken windows, and the walls are encumbered with hovels and stables and the refuse of surrounding streets.

One most remarkable feature of the internal decoration is a line of heads of the Popes carried all round the church above the lower arches. Larger than life, white solemn faces they lean, each from his separate niche, crowned with the triple tiara, and labelled with the name he bore. Their accumulated majesty brings the whole past history of the Church into the presence of its living members. A bishop walking up the nave of Siena must feel as a Roman felt among the waxen images of ancestors renowned in council or in war. Of course these portraits are imaginary for the most part ; but the artists have contrived to vary their features and expression with great skill.

Not less peculiar to Siena is the pavement of the cathedral. It is inlaid with a kind of *tarsia* work in stone, setting forth a variety of pictures in simple but eminently effective mosaic. Some of these compositions are as old as the cathedral ; others are the work of Beccafumi and his scholars. They represent, in the liberal spirit of mediæval Christianity, the history of the Church before the Incarnation. Hermes Trismegistus and the Sibyls meet us at the doorway : in the body of the church we find the mighty deeds of the old Jewish heroes—of Moses and Samson and Joshua and Judith. Independently of the artistic beauty of the designs, of the skill

with which men and horses are drawn in the most difficult attitudes, of the dignity of some single figures, and of the vigour and simplicity of the larger compositions, a special interest attaches to this pavement in connection with the twelfth canto of the 'Purgatorio.' Dante cannot have trodden these stones and meditated upon their sculptured histories. Yet when we read how he journeyed through the plain of Purgatory with eyes intent upon its storied floor, how 'morti i morti, e i vivi parean vivi,' how he saw 'Nimrod at the foot of his great work, confounded, gazing at the people who were proud with him,' we are irresistibly led to think of the Divine comedy. The strong and simple outlines of the pavement correspond to the few words of the poet. Bending over these pictures and trying to learn their lesson, with the thought of Dante in our mind, the tones of an organ, singularly sweet and mellow, fall upon our ears, and we remember how he heard *Te Deum* sung within the gateway of repentance.

Continuing our walk, we descend the hill on which the Duomo stands, and reach a valley lying between the ancient city of Siena and a western eminence crowned by the church of San Domenico. In this depression there has existed from old time a kind of suburb or separate district of the poorer people known by the name of the Contrada d' Oca. To the Sienese it has especial interest, for here is the birthplace of S. Catherine, the very house in which she lived, her father's workshop, and the chapel which has been erected in commemoration of her saintly life. Over the doorway is written in letters of gold 'Sponsæ Christi Katherinæ domus.' Inside they show the room she occupied, and the stone on which she placed her head to sleep; they keep her veil and staff and lantern and enamelled vinaigrette, the bag in which her alms were placed, the sackcloth that she wore beneath her dress, the crucifix from which she took the wounds of Christ. It is im-

possible to conceive, even after the lapse of several centuries, that any of these relics are fictitious. Every particular of her life was remembered and recorded with scrupulous attention by devoted followers. Her fame was universal throughout Italy before her death ; and the house from which she went forth to preach and heal the sick and comfort plague-stricken wretches whom kith and kin had left alone to die, was known and well beloved by all her citizens. From the moment of her death it became, and has continued to be, the object of superstitious veneration to thousands. From the little loggia which runs along one portion of its exterior may be seen the campanile and the dome of the cathedral ; on the other side rises the huge brick church of San Domenico, in which she spent the long ecstatic hours that won for her the title of Christ's spouse. In a chapel attached to the church she watched and prayed, fasting and wrestling with the fiends of a disordered fancy. There Christ appeared to her and gave her His own heart, there He administered to her the sacrament with His own hands, there she assumed the robe of poverty, and gave her Lord the silver cross and took from Him the crown of thorns.

To some of us these legends may appear the flimsiest web of fiction : to others they may seem quite explicable by the laws of semi-morbid psychology ; but to Catherine herself, her biographers, and her contemporaries, they were not so. The enthusiastic saint and reverent people believed firmly in these things ; and after the lapse of five centuries her votaries still kiss the floor and steps on which she trod, still say, ' This was the wall on which she leant when Christ appeared ; this was the corner where she clothed Him, naked and shivering like a beggar-boy ; here He sustained her with angels' food.'

S. Catherine was one of twenty-five children born in

wedlock to Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa, citizens of Siena. Her father exercised the trade of dyer and fuller. In the year of her birth, 1347, Siena reached the climax of its power and splendour. It was then that the plague of Boccaccio began to rage, which swept off 80,000 citizens, and interrupted the building of the great Duomo. In the midst of so large a family, and during these troubled times, Catherine grew almost unnoticed; but it was not long before she manifested her peculiar disposition. At six years old she already saw visions and longed for a monastic life: about the same time she used to collect her childish companions together and preach to them. As she grew, her wishes became stronger; she refused the proposals which her parents made that she should marry, and so vexed them by her obstinacy that they imposed on her the most servile duties in their household. These she patiently fulfilled, pursuing at the same time her own vocation with unwearied ardour. She scarcely slept at all, and ate no food but vegetables and a little bread, scourged herself, wore sackcloth, and became emaciated, weak, and half delirious. At length the firmness of her character and the force of her hallucinations won the day. Her parents consented to her assuming the Dominican robe, and at the age of thirteen she entered the monastic life. From this moment till her death we see in her the ecstatic, the philanthropist, and the politician combined to a remarkable degree. For three whole years she never left her cell except to go to church, maintaining an almost unbroken silence. Yet when she returned to the world, convinced at last of having won by prayer and pain the favour of her Lord, it was to preach to infuriated mobs, to toil among men dying of the plague, to execute diplomatic negotiations, to harangue the republic of Florence, to correspond with queens, and to interpose between kings and popes. In the midst of this varied and

distracting career she continued to see visions and to fast and scourge herself. The domestic virtues and the personal wants and wishes of a woman were annihilated in her : she lived for the Church, for the poor, and for Christ, whom she imagined to be constantly supporting her. At length she died, worn out by inward conflicts, by the tension of religious ecstasy, by want of food and sleep, and by the excitement of political life. To follow her in her public career is not my purpose. It is well known how, by the power of her eloquence and the ardour of her piety, she succeeded as a mediator between Florence and her native city, and between Florence and the Pope ; that she travelled to Avignon, and there induced Gregory XI. to put an end to the Babylonian captivity of the Church by returning to Rome ; that she narrowly escaped political martyrdom during one of her embassies from Gregory to the Florentine republic ; that she preached a crusade against the Turks ; that her last days were clouded with sorrow for the schism which then rent the Papacy ; and that she aided by her dying words to keep Pope Urban on the Papal throne. When we consider her private and spiritual life more narrowly, it may well move our amazement to think that the intricate politics of Central Italy, the counsels of licentious princes and ambitious Popes, were in any measure guided and controlled by such a woman. Alone, and aided by nothing but a reputation for sanctity, she dared to tell the greatest men in Europe of their faults ; she wrote in words of well-assured command, and they, demoralised, worldly, sceptical, or indifferent as they might be, were yet so bound by superstition that they could not treat with scorn the voice of an enthusiastic girl.

Absolute disinterestedness, the belief in her own spiritual mission, natural genius, and that vast power which then belonged to all energetic members of the monastic orders,

enabled her to play this part. She had no advantages to begin with. The daughter of a tradesman overwhelmed with an almost fabulously numerous progeny, Catherine grew up uneducated. When her genius had attained maturity, she could not even read or write. Her biographer asserts that she learned to do so by a miracle. Anyhow, writing became a most potent instrument in her hands; and we possess several volumes of her epistles, as well as a treatise of mystical theology. To conquer self-love as the root of all evil, and to live wholly for others, was the cardinal axiom of her morality. She pressed this principle to its most rigorous conclusions in practice; never resting day or night from some kind of service, and winning by her unselfish love the enthusiastic admiration of the people. In the same spirit of exalted self-annihilation, she longed for martyrdom, and courted death. There was not the smallest personal tie or afterthought of interest to restrain her in the course of action which she had marked out. Her personal influence seems to have been immense. When she began her career of public peacemaker and preacher in Siena, Raymond, her biographer, says that whole families devoted to *vendetta* were reconciled, and that civil strifes were quelled by her letters and addresses. He had seen more than a thousand people flock to hear her speak; the confessionals crowded with penitents, smitten by the force of her appeals; and multitudes, unable to catch the words which fell from her lips, sustained and animated by the light of holiness which beamed from her inspired countenance.¹ She was not beautiful, but her face so shone with love, and her eloquence was so pathetic in its tenderness, that none could hear or look on her without emotion. Her writings contain

¹ The part played in Italy by preachers of repentance and peace is among the most characteristic features of Italian history. On this subject see the Appendix to my 'Age of the Despots,' *Renaissance in Italy*, Part I.

abundant proofs of this peculiar suavity. They are too sweet and unctuous in style to suit our modern taste. When dwelling on the mystic love of Christ she cries, 'O blood ! O fire ! O ineffable love !' When interceding before the Pope, she prays for 'Pace, pace, pace, babbo mio dolce ; pace, e non più guerra.' Yet clear and simple thoughts, profound convictions, and stern moral teaching underlie her ecstatic exclamations. One prayer which she wrote, and which the people of Siena still use, expresses the prevailing spirit of her creed : 'O Spirito Santo, o Deità eterna Cristo Amore ! vieni nel mio cuore ; per la tua potenza trailo a Te, mio Dio, e concedemi carità con timore. Liberami, o Amore ineffabile, da ogni mal pensiero ; riscaldami ed infiammami del tuo dolcissimo amore, sicchè ogni pena mi sembri leggiera. Santo mio Padre e dolce mio Signore, ora aiutami in ogni mio ministero. Cristo amore. Cristo amore.' The reiteration of the word 'love' is most significant. It was the keynote of her whole theology, the mainspring of her life. In no merely figurative sense did she regard herself as the spouse of Christ, but dwelt upon the bliss, beyond all mortal happiness, which she enjoyed in supersensual communion with her Lord. It is easy to understand how such ideas might be, and have been, corrupted, when impressed on natures no less susceptible, but weaker and less gifted than S. Catherine's.

One incident related by Catherine in a letter to Raymond, her confessor and biographer, exhibits the peculiar character of her influence in the most striking light. Nicola Tuldo, a citizen of Perugia, had been condemned to death for treason in the flower of his age. So terribly did the man rebel against his sentence, that he cursed God, and refused the consolations of religion. Priests visited him in vain ; his heart was shut and sealed by the despair of leaving life in all

the vigour of its prime. Then Catherine came and spoke to him : 'whence,' she says, 'he received such comfort that he confessed, and made me promise, by the love of God, to stand at the block beside him on the day of his execution.' By a few words, by the tenderness of her manner, and by the charm which women have, she had already touched the heart no priest could soften, and no threat of death or judgment terrify into contrition. Nor was this strange. In our own days we have seen men open the secrets of their hearts to women, after repelling the advances of less touching sympathy. Youths, cold and cynical enough among their brethren, have stood subdued like little children before her who spoke to them of love and faith and penitence and hope. The world has not lost its ladies of the race of S. Catherine, beautiful and pure and holy, who have suffered and sought peace with tears, and who have been appointed ministers of mercy for the worst and hardest of their fellow-men. Such saints possess an efficacy even in the imposition of their hands ; many a devotee, like Tuldo, would more willingly greet death if his S. Catherine were by to smile and lay her hands upon his head, and cry, 'Go forth, my servant, and fear not !' The chivalrous admiration for women mixes with religious awe to form the reverence which these saints inspire. Human and heavenly love, chaste and ecstatic, constitute the secret of their power. Catherine then subdued the spirit of Tuldo and led him to the altar, where he received the communion for the first time in his life. His only remaining fear was that he might not have strength to face death bravely. Therefore he prayed Catherine, 'Stay with me, do not leave me ; so it shall be well with me, and I shall die contented ;' 'and,' says the saint, 'he laid his head in the prison on my breast, and I said, "Comfort thee, my brother, the block shall soon become thy marriage altar, the blood of Christ

shall bathe thy sins away, and I will stand beside thee.”’ When the hour came, she went and waited for him by the scaffold, meditating on Madonna and Catherine the saint of Alexandria. She laid her own neck on the block, and tried to picture to herself the pains and ecstasies of martyrdom. In her deep thought, time and place became annihilated; she forgot the eager crowd, and only prayed for Tuldo’s soul and for herself. At length he came, walking ‘like a gentle lamb,’ and Catherine received him with the salutation of ‘sweet brother.’ She placed his head upon the block, and laid her hands upon him, and told him of the Lamb of God. The last words he uttered were the names of Jesus and of Catherine. Then the axe fell, and Catherine beheld his soul borne by angels into the regions of eternal love. When she recovered from her trance, she held his head within her hands; her dress was saturated with his blood, which she could scarcely bear to wash away, so deeply did she triumph in the death of him whom she had saved. The words of S. Catherine herself deserve to be read. The simplicity, freedom from self-consciousness, and fervent faith in the reality of all she did and said and saw, which they exhibit, convince us of her entire sincerity.

The supernatural element in the life of S. Catherine may be explained partly by the mythologising adoration of the people ready to find a miracle in every act of her they worshipped—partly by her own temperament and modes of life, which inclined her to ecstasy and fostered the faculty of seeing visions—partly by a pious misconception of the words of Christ and Bible phraseology.

To the first kind belong the wonders which are related of her early years, the story of the candle which burnt her veil without injuring her person, and the miracles performed by her body after death. Many childish incidents were

treasured up which, had her life proved different, would have been forgotten, or have found their proper place among the catalogue of common things. Thus on one occasion, after hearing of the hermits of the Thebaïd, she took it into her head to retire into the wilderness, and chose for her dwelling one of the caverns in the sandstone rock which abound in Siena near the quarter where her father lived. We merely see in this event a sign of her monastic disposition, and a more than usual aptitude for realising the ideas presented to her mind. But the old biographers relate how one celestial vision urged the childish hermit to forsake the world, and another bade her return to the duties of her home.

To the second kind we may refer the frequent communings with Christ and with the fathers of the Church, together with the other visions to which she frequently laid claim : nor must we omit the stigmata which she believed she had received from Christ. Catherine was constitutionally inclined to hallucinations. At the age of six, before it was probable that a child should have laid claim to spiritual gifts which she did not possess, she burst into loud weeping because her little brother rudely distracted her attention from the brilliant forms of saints and angels which she traced among the clouds. Almost all children of a vivid imagination are apt to transfer the objects of their fancy to the world without them. Goethe walked for hours in his enchanted gardens as a boy, and Alfieri tells us how he saw a company of angels in the choristers at Asti. Nor did S. Catherine omit any means of cultivating this faculty, and of preventing her splendid visions from fading away, as they almost always do, beneath the discipline of intellectual education and among the distractions of daily life. Believing simply in their heavenly origin, and receiving no secular training whatsoever, she walked surrounded by a spiritual world, environed, as her legend says, by angels. Her

habits were calculated to foster this disposition : it is related that she took but little sleep, scarcely more than two hours at night, and that too on the bare ground ; she ate nothing but vegetables and the sacred wafer of the host, entirely abjuring the use of wine and meat. This diet, combined with frequent fasts and severe ascetic discipline, depressed her physical forces, and her nervous system was thrown into a state of the highest exaltation. Thoughts became things, and ideas were projected from her vivid fancy upon the empty air around her. It was therefore no wonder that, after spending long hours in vigils and meditating always on the thought of Christ, she should have seemed to take the sacrament from His hands, to pace the chapel in communion with Him, to meet Him in the form of priest and beggar, to hear Him speaking to her as a friend. Once when the anguish of sin had plagued her with disturbing dreams, Christ came and gave her His own heart in exchange for hers. When lost in admiration before the cross at Pisa, she saw His five wounds stream with blood—five crimson rays smote her, passed into her soul, and left their marks upon her hands and feet and side. The light of Christ's glory shone round about her, she partook of His martyrdom, and awaking from her trance she cried to Raymond, ' Behold ! I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus ! '

This miracle had happened to S. Francis. It was regarded as the sign of fellowship with Christ, of worthiness to drink His cup, and to be baptised with His baptism. We find the same idea at least in the old Latin hymns :

Fac me plagis vulnerari—
Cruce hac inebriari—
Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolere.

These are words from the 'Stabat Mater;' nor did S. Francis and S. Catherine do more than carry into the vividness of actual hallucination what had been the poetic rapture of many less ecstatic, but not less ardent, souls. They desired to be *literally* 'crucified with Christ;' they were not satisfied with metaphor or sentiment, and it seemed to them that their Lord had really vouchsafed to them the yearning of their heart. We need not here raise the question whether the stigmata had ever been actually self-inflicted by delirious saint or hermit: it was not pretended that the wounds of S. Catherine were visible during her lifetime. After her death the faithful thought that they had seen them on her corpse, and they actually appeared in the relics of her hands and feet. The pious fraud, if fraud there must have been, should be ascribed, not to the saint herself, but to devotees and relic-mongers.¹ The order of S. Dominic would not be behind that of S. Francis. If the latter boasted of their stigmata, the former would be ready to perforate the hand or foot of their dead saint. Thus the ecstasies of genius or devotion are brought to earth, and rendered vulgar by mistaken piety and the rivalry of sects. The people put the most material construction on all tropes and metaphors: above the door of S. Catherine's chapel at Siena, for example, it is written—

Hæc tenet ara caput Catharinæ; corda requiris?

Hæc imo Christus pectore clausa tenet.

The frequent conversations which she held with S. Dominic and other patrons of the Church, and her supernatural marriage, must be referred to the same category. Strong faith,

¹ It is not impossible that the stigmata may have been naturally produced in the person of S. Francis or S. Catherine. There are cases on record in which grave nervous disturbances have resulted in such modifications of the flesh as may have left the traces of wounds in scars and blisters.

and constant familiarity with one order of ideas, joined with a creative power of fancy, and fostered by physical debility, produced these miraculous colloquies. Early in her career, her injured constitution, resenting the violence with which it had been forced to serve the ardours of her piety, troubled her with foul phantoms, haunting images of sin and seductive whisperings, which clearly revealed a morbid condition of the nervous system. She was on the verge of insanity. The reality of her inspiration and her genius are proved by the force with which her human sympathies, and moral dignity, and intellectual vigour triumphed over these diseased hallucinations of the cloister, and converted them into the instruments for effecting patriotic and philanthropic designs. There was nothing savouring of mean pretension or imposture in her claim to supernatural enlightenment. Whatever we may think of the wisdom of her public policy with regard to the Crusades and to the Papal Sovereignty, it is impossible to deny that a holy and high object possessed her from the earliest to the latest of her life—that she lived for ideas greater than self-aggrandisement or the saving of her soul, for the greatest, perhaps, which her age presented to an earnest Catholic.

The abuses to which the indulgence of temperaments like that of S. Catherine must in many cases have given rise, are obvious. Hysterical women and half-witted men, without possessing her abilities and understanding her objects, beheld unmeaning visions, and dreamed childish dreams. Others won the reputation of sanctity by obstinate neglect of all the duties of life and of all the decencies of personal cleanliness. Every little town in Italy could show its saints like the Santa Fina of whom San Gimignano boasts—a girl who lay for seven years on a back-board till her mortified flesh clung to the wood; or the San Bartolo, who, for hideous leprosy, received

the title of the Job of Tuscany. Children were encouraged in blasphemous pretensions to the special power of Heaven, and the nerves of weak women were shaken by revelations in which they only half believed. We have ample evidence to prove how the trade of miracles is still carried on, and how in the France of our days, when intellectual vigour has been separated from old forms of faith, such vision-mongering undermines morality, encourages ignorance, and saps the force of individuals. But S. Catherine must not be confounded with those sickly shams and make-believes. Her enthusiasms were real; they were proper to her age; they inspired her with unrivalled self-devotion and unwearied energy; they connected her with the political and social movements of her country.

Many of the supernatural events in S. Catherine's life were founded on a too literal acceptance of biblical metaphors. The Canticles, perhaps, inspired her with the belief in a mystical marriage. An enigmatical sentence of S. Paul's suggested the stigmata. When the saint bestowed her garment upon Christ in the form of a beggar and gave Him the silver cross of her rosary, she was but realising His own words: 'Inasmuch as ye shall do it unto the least of these little ones, ye shall do it unto Me.' Charity, according to her conception, consisted in giving to Christ. He had first taught this duty; He would make it the test of all duty at the last day. Catherine was charitable for the love of Christ. She thought less of the beggar than of her Lord. How could she do otherwise than see the aureole about His forehead, and hear the voice of Him who had declared, 'Behold, I am with you, even to the end of the world.' Those were times of childlike simplicity when the eye of love was still unclouded, when men could see beyond the phantoms of this world, and stripping off the accidents of matter, gaze upon the spiritual and eternal truths

that lie beneath. Heaven lay around them in that infancy of faith ; nor did they greatly differ from the saints and founders of the Church—from Paul, who saw the vision of the Lord, or Magdalen, who cried, ‘ He is risen ! ’ An age accustomed to veil thought in symbols, easily reversed the process and discerned essential qualities beneath the common or indifferent objects of the outer world. It was therefore Christ whom S. Christopher carried in the shape of a child ; Christ whom Fra Angelico’s Dominicans received in pilgrim’s garb at their convent gate ; Christ with whom, under a leper’s loathsome form, the flower of Spanish chivalry was said to have shared his couch.

In all her miracles it will be noticed that S. Catherine showed no originality. Her namesake of Alexandria had already been proclaimed the spouse of Christ. S. Francis had already received the stigmata ; her other visions were such as had been granted to all fervent mystics ; they were the growth of current religious ideas and unbounded faith. It is not as an innovator in religious ecstasy, or as the creator of a new kind of spiritual poetry, that we admire S. Catherine. Her inner life was simply the foundation of her character, her visions were a source of strength to her in times of trial, or the expression of a more than usually exalted mood ; but the means by which she moved the hearts of men belonged to that which she possessed in common with all leaders of mankind—enthusiasm, eloquence, the charm of a gracious nature, and the will to do what she designed. She founded no religious order, like S. Francis or S. Dominic, her predecessors, or Loyola, her successor. Her work was a woman’s work—to make peace, to succour the afflicted, to strengthen the Church, to purify the hearts of those around her ; not to rule or organise. When she died she left behind her a memory of love more than of power, the fragrance of an unselfish and

gentle life, the echo of sweet and earnest words. Her place is in the heart of the humble; children belong to her sisterhood, and the poor crowd her shrine on festivals.

Catherine died at Rome on the 29th of April 1380, in her thirty-third year, surrounded by the most faithful of her friends and followers; but it was not until 1461 that she received the last honour of canonisation from the hands of Pius II., Æneas Sylvius, her countryman. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini was perhaps the most remarkable man that Siena has produced. Like S. Catherine, he was one of a large family; twenty of his brothers and sisters perished in a plague. The licentiousness of his early life, the astuteness of his intellect, and the worldliness of his aims, contrast with the singularly disinterested character of the saint on whom he conferred the highest honours of the Church. But he accomplished by diplomacy and skill what Catherine had begun. If she was instrumental in restoring the Popes to Rome, he ended the schism which had clouded her last days. She had preached a crusade; he lived to assemble the armies of Christendom against the Turks, and died at Ancona, while it was still uncertain whether the authority and enthusiasm of a pope could steady the wavering counsels and vacillating wills of kings and princes. The middle ages were still vital in S. Catherine; Pius II. belonged by taste and genius to the new period of Renaissance. The hundreds of the poorer Sienese who kneel before S. Catherine's shrine prove that her memory is still alive in the hearts of her fellow-citizens; while the gorgeous library of the cathedral, painted by the hand of Pinturicchio, the sumptuous palace and the Loggia del Papa designed by Bernardo Rossellino and Antonio Federighi, record the pride and splendour of the greatest of the Piccolomini. But honourable as it was for Pius to fill so high a place in the annals of his city; to have left it as a poor adventurer, to return to it first as bishop, then

as pope : to have a chamber in its mother church adorned with the pictured history of his achievements for a monument, and a triumph of Renaissance architecture dedicated to his family, *gentilibus suis*—yet we cannot but feel that the better part remains with S. Catherine, whose prayer is still whispered by children on their mother's knee, and whose relics are kissed daily by the simple and devout.

Some of the chief Italian painters have represented the incidents of S. Catherine's life and of her mystical experience. All the pathos and beauty which we admire in Sodoma's S. Sebastian at Florence, are surpassed by his fresco of S. Catherine receiving the stigmata. This is one of several subjects painted by him on the walls of her chapel in San Domenico. The tender unction, the sweetness, the languor, and the grace which he commanded with such admirable mastery, are all combined in the figure of the saint falling exhausted into the arms of her attendant nuns. Soft undulating lines rule the composition ; yet dignity of attitude and feature prevails over mere loveliness. Another of Siena's greatest masters, Beccafumi, has treated the same subject with less pictorial skill and dramatic effect, but with an earnestness and simplicity that are very touching. Colourists always liked to introduce the sweeping lines of her white robes into their compositions. Fra Bartolommeo, who showed consummate art by tempering the masses of white drapery with mellow tones of brown or amber, painted one splendid picture of the marriage of S. Catherine, and another in which he represents her prostrate in adoration before the mystery of the Trinity. His gentle and devout soul sympathised with the spirit of the saint. The fervour of her devotion belonged to him more truly than the leonine power which he unsuccessfully attempted to express in his large figure of S. Mark. Other artists have painted the two Catherines

together—the princess of Alexandria, crowned and robed in purple, bearing her palm of martyrdom, beside the nun of Siena, holding in her hand the lantern with which she went about by night among the sick. Ambrogio Borgognone makes them stand one on each side of Madonna's throne, while the infant Christ upon her lap extends His hands to both, in token of their marriage.

The traditional type of countenance which may be traced in all these pictures is not without a real foundation. Not only does there exist at Siena, in the Church of San Domenico, a contemporary portrait of S. Catherine, but her head also, which was embalmed immediately after death, is still preserved. The skin of the face is fair and white, like parchment, and the features have more the air of sleep than death. We find in them the breadth and squareness of general outline, and the long, even eyebrows which give peculiar calm to the expression of her pictures. This relic is shown publicly once a year on the 6th of May. That is the Festa of the saint, when a procession of priests and acolytes, and pious people holding tapers, and little girls dressed out in white, carry a splendid silver image of their patroness about the city. Banners and crosses and censers go in front; then follows the shrine beneath a canopy: roses and leaves of box are scattered on the path. The whole Contrada d'Oca is decked out with such finery as the people can muster: red cloths hung from the windows, branches and garlands strewn about the doorsteps, with brackets for torches on the walls, and altars erected in the middle of the street. Troops of country-folk and townspeople and priests go in and out to visit the cell of S. Catherine; the upper and the lower chapel, built upon its site, and the hall of the *confraternità* blaze with lighted tapers. The faithful, full of wonder, kneel or stand about the 'santi luoghi,' marvelling at the relics, and

repeating to one another the miracles of the saint. The same bustle pervades the Church of San Domenico. Masses are being said at one or other chapel all the morning, while women in their flapping Tuscan hats crowd round the silver image of S. Catherine, and say their prayers with a continual undercurrent of responses to the nasal voice of priest or choir. Others gain entrance to the chapel of the saint, and kneel before her altar. There, in the blaze of sunlight and of tapers, far away behind the gloss and gilding of a tawdry shrine, is seen the pale, white face which spoke and suffered so much, years ago. The contrast of its rigid stillness and half-concealed corruption with the noise and life and light outside is very touching. Even so the remnant of a dead idea still stirs the souls of thousands, and many ages may roll by before time and oblivion assert their inevitable sway.

MONTE OLIVETO

I

IN former days the traveller had choice of two old hostelries in the chief street of Siena. Here, if he was fortunate, he might secure a prophet's chamber, with a view across tiled houseroofs to the distant Tuscan champaign—glimpses of russet field and olive-garden framed by jutting city walls, which in some measure compensated for much discomfort. He now betakes himself to the more modern Albergo di Siena, overlooking the public promenade La Lizza. Horse-chestnuts and acacias make a pleasant foreground to a prospect of considerable extent. The front of the house is turned toward Belcaro and the mountains between Grosseto and Volterra. Sideways its windows command the brown bulk of San Domenico, and the Duomo, set like a marble coronet upon the forehead of the town. When we arrived there one October afternoon the sun was setting amid flying clouds and watery yellow spaces of pure sky, with a wind blowing soft and humid from the sea. Long after he had sunk below the hills, a fading chord of golden and rose-coloured tints burned on the city. The cathedral bell tower was glistening with recent rain, and we could see right through its lancet windows to the clear blue heavens beyond. Then, as the day descended into evening, the autumn trees assumed that wonderful effect of luminousness self-evolved,

and the red brick walls that crimson afterglow, which Tuscan twilight takes from singular transparency of atmosphere.

It is hardly possible to define the specific character of each Italian city, assigning its proper share to natural circumstances, to the temper of the population, and to the monuments of art in which these elements of nature and of human qualities are blended. The fusion is too delicate and subtle for complete analysis; and the total effect in each particular case may best be compared to that impressed on us by a strong personality, making itself felt in the minutest details. Climate, situation, ethnological conditions, the political vicissitudes of past ages, the bias of the people to certain industries and occupations, the emergence of distinguished men at critical epochs, have all contributed their quota to the composition of an individuality which abides long after the locality has lost its ancient vigour.

Since the year 1557, when Gian Giacomo de' Medici laid the country of Siena waste, levelled her luxurious suburbs, and delivered her famine-stricken citizens to the tyranny of the Grand Duke Cosimo, this town has gone on dreaming in suspended decadence. Yet the epithet which was given to her in her days of glory, the title of 'Fair Soft Siena,' still describes the city. She claims it by right of the gentle manners, joyous but sedate, of her inhabitants, by the grace of their pure Tuscan speech, and by the unique delicacy of her architecture. Those palaces of brick, with finely moulded lancet windows, and the lovely use of sculptured marbles in pilastered colonnades, are fit abodes for the nobles who reared them five centuries ago, of whose refined and costly living we read in the pages of Dante or of Folgore da San Gemignano. And though the necessities of modern life, the decay of wealth, the dwindling of old aristocracy, and the absorption of what was once an independent state in the Italian nation,

have obliterated that large signorial splendour of the Middle Ages, we feel that the modern Sieneſe are not unworthy of their courteous ancestry.

Superficially, much of the preſent charm of Siena conſiſts in the ſoft opening valleys, the glimpses of long blue hills and fertile country-side, framed by irregular brown houſes ſtretching along the ſlopes on which the town is built, and loſing themſelves abruptly in olive fields and orchards. This element of beauty, which brings the city into immediate relation with the country, is indeed not peculiar to Siena. We find it in Perugia, in Aſſiſi, in Montepulciano, in nearly all the hill towns of Umbria and Tuscany. But their landscape is often tragic and austere, while this is always ſuave. City and country blend here in delightful amity. Neither yields that ſenſe of aloofneſs which ſtirs melancholy.

The moſt charming diſtrict in the immediate neighbourhood of Siena lies weſtward, near Belcaro, a villa high up on a hill. It is a region of deep lanes and golden-green oak-woods, with cypreſſes and ſtone-pines, and little ſtreams in all directions flowing over the brown ſandſtone. The country is like ſome parts of rural England—Devonſhire or Suſſex. Not only is the ſandſtone here, as there, broken into deep gullies; but the vegetation is much the ſame. Tufted ſpleenwort, primroſes, and broom tangle the hedges under boughs of hornbeam and ſweet-cheſtnut. This is the landscape which the two ſixteenth-century noveliſts of Siena, Fortini and Sermini, ſo lovingly depicted in their tales. Of literature abſorbing in itſelf the ſpecific character of a country, and conveying it to the reader leſs by deſcription than by ſuſtained quality of ſtyle, I know none to ſurpaſs Fortini's ſketches. The proſpect from Belcaro is one of the fineſt to be ſeen in Tuscany. The villa ſtands at a conſiderable elevation, and commands an immense extent of hill and dale.

Nowhere, except Maremma-wards, a level plain. The Tuscan mountains, from Monte Amiata westward to Volterra, round Valdelsa, down to Montepulciano and Radicofani, with their innumerable windings and intricacies of descending valleys, are dappled with light and shade from flying storm-clouds, sunshine here, and there cloud-shadows. Girdling the villa stands a grove of ilex-trees, cut so as to embrace its high-built walls with dark continuous green. In the courtyard are lemon-trees and pomegranates laden with fruit. From a terrace on the roof the whole wide view is seen ; and here upon a parapet, from which we leaned one autumn afternoon, my friend discovered this *graffito* : ‘ *E vidi e piansi il fato amaro !* ’—‘ I gazed, and gazing, wept the bitterness of fate.’

II

The prevailing note of Siena and the Sienese seems, as I have said, to be a soft and tranquil grace ; yet this people had one of the stormiest and maddest of Italian histories. They were passionate in love and hate, vehement in their popular amusements, almost frantic in their political conduct of affairs. The luxury, for which Dante blamed them, the levity De Comines noticed in their government, found counterpoise in more than usual piety and fervour. S. Bernardino, the great preacher and peacemaker of the Middle Ages ; S. Catherine, the worthiest of all women to be canonised ; the blessed Colombini, who founded the Order of the Gesuati or Brothers of the Poor in Christ ; the blessed Bernardo, who founded that of Monte Oliveto ; were all Sienese. Few cities have given four such saints to modern Christendom. The biography of one of these may serve as prelude to an account of the Sienese monastery of Oliveto Maggiore.

The family of Tolomei was among the noblest of the

Sienese aristocracy. On May 10, 1272, Mino Tolomei and his wife Fulvia, of the Tancredi, had a son whom they christened Giovanni, but who, when he entered the religious life, assumed the name of Bernard, in memory of the great Abbot of Clairvaux. Of this child, Fulvia is said to have dreamed, long before his birth, that he assumed the form of a white swan, and sang melodiously, and settled in the boughs of an olive-tree, whence afterwards he winged his way to heaven amid a flock of swans as dazzling white as he. The boy was educated in the Dominican Cloister at Siena, under the care of his uncle Cristoforo Tolomei. There, and afterwards in the fraternity of S. Ansano, he felt that impulse towards a life of piety, which after a short but brilliant episode of secular ambition, was destined to return with overwhelming force upon his nature. He was a youth of promise, and at the age of sixteen he obtained the doctorate in philosophy and both laws, civil and canonical. The Tolomei upon this occasion adorned their palaces and threw them open to the people of Siena. The Republic hailed with acclamation the early honours of a noble, born to be one of their chief leaders. Soon after this event Mino obtained for his son from the Emperor the title of Cæsarian Knight; and when the diploma arrived, new festivities proclaimed the fortunate youth to his fellow-citizens. Bernardo cased his limbs in steel, and rode in procession with ladies and young nobles through the streets. The ceremonies of a knight's reception in Siena at that period were magnificent. From contemporary chronicles and from the sonnets written by Folgore da San Gemignano for a similar occasion, we gather that the whole resources of a wealthy family and all their friends were strained to the utmost to do honour to the order of chivalry. Open house was held for several days. Rich presents of jewels, armour, dresses, chargers were freely

distributed. Tournaments alternated with dances. But the climax of the pageant was the novice's investiture with sword and spurs and belt in the cathedral. This, as it appears from a record of the year 1326, actually took place in the great marble pulpit carved by the Pisani; and the most illustrious knights of his acquaintance were summoned by the squire to act as sponsors for his fealty.

It is said that young Bernardo Tolomei's head was turned to vanity by these honours showered upon him in his earliest manhood. Yet, after a short period of aberration, he rejoined his confraternity and mortified his flesh by discipline and strict attendance on the poor. The time had come, however, when he should choose a career suitable to his high rank. He devoted himself to jurisprudence, and began to lecture publicly on law. Already at the age of twenty-five his fellow-citizens admitted him to the highest political offices, and in the legend of his life it is written, not without exaggeration doubtless, that he ruled the State. There is, however, no reason to suppose that he did not play an important part in its government. Though a just and virtuous statesman, Bernardo now forgot the special service of God, and gave himself with heart and soul to mundane interests. At the age of forty, supported by the wealth, alliances, and reputation of his semi-princely house, he had become one of the most considerable party-leaders in that age of faction. If we may trust his monastic biographer, he was aiming at nothing less than the tyranny of Siena. But in that year, when he was forty, a change, which can only be described as conversion, came over him. He had advertised a public disputation, in which he proposed before all comers to solve the most arduous problems of scholastic science. The concourse was great, the assembly brilliant; but the hero of the day, who had designed it for his glory, was stricken with sudden blindness. In one

moment he comprehended the internal void he had created for his soul, and the blindness of the body was illumination to the spirit. The pride, power, and splendour of this world seemed to him a smoke that passes. God, penitence, eternity appeared in all the awful clarity of an authentic vision. He fell upon his knees and prayed to Mary that he might receive his sight again. This boon was granted; but the revelation which had come to him in blindness was not withdrawn. Meanwhile the hall of disputation was crowded with an expectant audience. Bernardo rose from his knees, made his entry, and ascended the chair; but instead of the scholastic subtleties he had designed to treat, he pronounced the old text, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'

Afterwards, attended by two noble comrades, Patrizio Patrizzi and Ambrogio Piccolomini, he went forth into the wilderness. For the human soul, at strife with strange experience, betakes itself instinctively to solitude. Not only prophets of Israel, saints of the Thebaïd, and founders of religions in the mystic East have done so; even the Greek Menander recognised, although he sneered at, the phenomenon. 'The desert, they say, is the place for discoveries.' For the mediæval mind it had peculiar attractions. The wilderness these comrades chose was Accona, a doleful place, hemmed in with earthen precipices, some fifteen miles to the south of Siena. Of his vast possessions Bernardo retained but this—

The lonesome lodge,
That stood so low in a lonely glen.

The rest of his substance he abandoned to the poor. This was in 1313, the very year of the Emperor Henry VII.'s death at Buonconvento, which is a little walled town between Siena and the desert of Accona. Whether Bernardo's retirement was in any way due to the extinction of immediate hope

for the Ghibelline party by this event, we do not gather from his legend. That, as is natural, refers his action wholly to the operation of divine grace. Yet we may remember how a more illustrious refugee, the singer of the 'Divine Comedy,' betook himself upon the same occasion to the lonely convent of Fonte Avellana on the Alps of Catria, and meditated there the cantos of his Purgatory. While Bernardo Tolomei was founding the Order of Monte Oliveto, Dante penned his letter to the cardinals of Italy: *Quomodo sola sedet civitas plena populo : facta est quasi vidua domina gentium.*

Bernardo and his friends hollowed with their own hands grottos in the rock, and strewed their stone beds with withered chestnut-leaves. For S. Scolastica, the sister of S. Benedict, they built a little chapel. Their food was wild fruit, and their drink the water of the brook. Through the day they dived, for it was in their mind to turn the wilderness into a land of plenty. By night they meditated on eternal truth. The contrast between their rude life and the delicate nurture of Sienese nobles, in an age when Siena had become a by-word for luxury, must have been cruel. But it fascinated the mediæval imagination, and the three anchorites were speedily joined by recruits of a like temper. As yet the new-born order had no rules ; for Bernardo, when he renounced the world, embraced humility. The brethren were bound together only by the ties of charity. They lived in common ; and under their sustained efforts Accona soon became a garden.

The society could not, however, hold together without further organisation. It began to be ill spoken of, inasmuch as vulgar minds can recognise no good except in what is formed upon a pattern they are familiar with. Then Bernardo had a vision. In his sleep he saw a ladder of light ascending to the heavens. Above sat Jesus with Our Lady in white

raiment, and the celestial hierarchies around them were attired in white. Up the ladder, led by angels, climbed men in vesture of dazzling white ; and among these Bernardo recognised his own companions. Soon after this dream, he called Ambrogio Piccolomini, and bade him get ready for a journey to the Pope at Avignon.

John XXII. received the pilgrims graciously, and gave them letters to the Bishop of Arezzo, commanding him to furnish the new brotherhood with one of the rules authorised by Holy Church for governance of a monastic order. Guido Tarlati, of the great Pietra-mala house, was Bishop and despot of Arezzo at this epoch. A man less in harmony with cœnobitical enthusiasm than this warrior prelate, could scarcely have been found. Yet attendance to such matters formed part of his business, and the legend even credits him with an inspired dream ; for Our Lady appeared to him, and said : ‘ I love the valley of Accona and its pious solitaries. Give them the rule of Benedict. But thou shalt strip them of their mourning weeds, and clothe them in white raiment, the symbol of my virgin purity. Their hermitage shall change its name, and henceforth shall be called Mount Olivet, in memory of the ascension of my divine Son, the which took place upon the Mount of Olives. I take this family beneath my own protection ; and therefore it is my will it should be called henceforth the congregation of S. Mary of Mount Olivet.’ After this, the Blessed Virgin took forethought for the heraldic designs of her monks, dictating to Guido Tarlati the blazon they still bear ; it is of three hills or, whereof the third and highest is surmounted with a cross gules, and from the meeting-point of the three hillocks upon either hand a branch of olive vert. This was in 1319. In 1324 John XXII. confirmed the order, and in 1344 it was further approved by Clement VI. Affiliated societies sprang

up in several Tuscan cities ; and in 1347, Bernardo Tolomei, at that time General of the Order, held a chapter of its several houses. The next year was the year of the great plague or Black Death. Bernardo bade his brethren leave their seclusion, and go forth on works of mercy among the sick. Some went to Florence, some to Siena, others to the smaller hill-set towns of Tuscany. All were bidden to assemble on the Feast of the Assumption at Siena. Here the founder addressed his spiritual children for the last time. Soon afterwards he died himself, at the age of seventy-seven, and the place of his grave is not known. He was beatified by the Church for his great virtues.

III

At noon we started, four of us, in an open waggonette with a pair of horses, for Monte Oliveto, the luggage heaped mountain-high and tied in a top-heavy mass above us. After leaving the gateway, with its massive fortifications and frescoed arches, the road passes into a dull earthy country, very much like some parts—and not the best parts—of England. The beauty of the Sienese contado is clearly on the sandstone, not upon the clay. Hedges, haystacks, isolated farms—all were English in their details. Only the vines, and mulberries, and wattled waggons drawn by oxen, most Roman in aspect, reminded us we were in Tuscany. In such *carpenta* may the vestal virgins have ascended the Capitol. It is the primitive war-chariot also, capable of holding four with ease ; and Romulus may have mounted with the images of Roman gods in even such a vehicle to Latian Jove upon the Alban hill. Nothing changes in Italy. The wooden ploughs are those which Virgil knew. The sight of one of them would

save an intelligent lad much trouble in mastering a certain passage of the Georgics.

Siena is visible behind us nearly the whole way to Buonconvento, a little town where the Emperor Henry VII. died, as it was supposed, of poison, in 1313. It is still circled with the wall and gates built by the Sienese in 1366, and is a fair specimen of an intact mediæval stronghold. Here we leave the main road, and break into a country-track across a bed of sandstone, with the delicate volcanic lines of Monte Amiata in front, and the aërial pile of Montalcino to our right. The pyracanthus bushes in the hedge yield their clusters of bright yellow berries, mingled with more glowing hues of red from haws and glossy hips. On the pale grey earthen slopes men and women are plying the long Sabellian hoes of their forefathers, and ploughmen are driving furrows down steep hills. The labour of the husbandmen in Tuscany is very graceful, partly, I think, because it is so primitive, but also because the people have an eminently noble carriage, and are fashioned on the lines of antique statues. I noticed two young contadini in one field, whom Frederick Walker might have painted with the dignity of Pheidias form. They were guiding their ploughs along a hedge of olive-trees, slanting upwards, the white-horned oxen moving slowly through the marl, and the lads bending to press the ploughshares home. It was a delicate piece of colour—the grey mist of olive branches, the warm smoking earth, the creamy flanks of the oxen, the brown limbs and dark eyes of the men, who paused awhile to gaze at us, with shadows cast upon the furrows from their tall straight figures. Then they turned to their work again, and rhythmic movement was added to the picture. I wonder when an Italian artist will condescend to pluck these flowers of beauty, so abundantly offered by the simplest things in his own native land. Each city has

an Accademia delle Belle Arti, and there is no lack of students. But the painters, having learned their trade, make copies ten times distant from the truth of famous masterpieces for the American market. Few seem to look beyond their picture galleries. Thus the democratic art, the art of Millet, the art of life and nature and the people, waits.

As we mount, the soil grows of a richer brown ; and there are woods of oak where herds of swine are feeding on the acorns. Monte Oliveto comes in sight—a mass of red brick, backed up with cypresses, among dishevelled earthy precipices, *balze* as they are called—upon the hill below the village of Chiusure. This Chiusure was once a promising town ; but the life was crushed out of it in the throes of mediæval civil wars, and since the thirteenth century it has been dwindling to a hamlet. The struggle for existence, from which the larger communes of this district, Siena and Montepulciano, emerged at the expense of their neighbours, must have been tragical. The *balze* now grow sterner, drier, more dreadful. We see how deluges outpoured from thunderstorms bring down their viscous streams of loam, destroying in an hour the terraces it took a year to build, and spreading wasteful mud upon the scanty cornfields. The people call this soil *creta* ; but it seems to be less like a chalk than a marl, or *marna*. It is always washing away into ravines and gullies, exposing the roots of trees, and rendering the tillage of the land a thankless labour. One marvels how any vegetation has the faith to settle on its dreary waste, or how men have the patience, generation after generation, to renew the industry, still beginning, never ending, which reclaims such wildernesses. Comparing Monte Oliveto with similar districts of cretaceous soil—with the country, for example, between Pienza and San Quirico—we perceive how much is owed to the perseverance of the monks whom Bernard

Tolomei planted here. So far as it is clothed at all with crop and wood, this is their service.

At last we climb the crowning hill, emerge from a copse of oak, glide along a terraced pathway through the broom, and find ourselves in front of the convent gateway. A substantial tower of red brick, machicolated at the top and pierced with small square windows, guards this portal, reminding us that at some time or other the monks found it needful to arm their solitude against a force descending from Chiusure. There is an avenue of slender cypresses; and over the gate, protected by a jutting roof, shines a fresco of Madonna and Child. Passing rapidly downwards, we are in the courtyard of the monastery, among its stables, barns, and out-houses, with the forlorn bulk of the huge red building, spreading wide, and towering up above us. As good luck ruled our arrival, we came face to face with the Abbate de Negro, who administers the domain of Monte Oliveto for the Government of Italy, and exercises a kindly hospitality to chance-comers. He was standing near the church, which, with its tall square campanile, breaks the long stern outline of the convent. The whole edifice, it may be said, is composed of a red-brick inclining to purple in tone, which contrasts not unpleasantly with the lustrous green of the cypresses, and the glaucous sheen of olives. Advantage has been taken of a steep crest; and the monastery, enlarged from time to time through the last five centuries, has here and there been reared upon gigantic buttresses, which jut upon the *balze* at a sometimes giddy height.

The Abbate received us with true courtesy, and gave us spacious rooms, three cells apiece, facing Siena and the western mountains. There is accommodation, he told us, for three hundred monks; but only three are left in it. As this order was confined to members of the nobility, each of

the religious had his own apartment—not a cubicle such as the uninstructed dream of when they read of monks, but separate chambers for sleep and study and recreation.

In the middle of the vast sad landscape, the place is still, with a silence that can be almost heard. The deserted state of those innumerable cells, those echoing corridors and shadowy cloisters, exercises overpowering tyranny over the imagination. Siena is so far away, and Montalcino is so faintly outlined on its airy parapet, that these cities only deepen our sense of desolation. It is a relief to mark at no great distance on the hillside a contadino guiding his oxen, and from a lonely farm yon column of ascending smoke. At least the world goes on, and life is somewhere resonant with song. But here there rests a pall of silence among the oak-groves and the cypresses and *balze*. As I leaned and mused, while Christian (my good friend and fellow-traveller from the Grisons) made our beds, a melancholy sunset flamed up from a rampart of cloud, built like a city of the air above the mountains of Volterra—fire issuing from its battlements, and smiting the fretted roof of heaven above. It was a conflagration of celestial rose upon the saddest purples and cavernous recesses of intensest azure.

We had an excellent supper in the visitors' refectory—soup, good bread and country wine, ham, a roast chicken with potatoes, a nice white cheese made of sheep's milk, and grapes for dessert. The kind Abbate sat by, and watched his four guests eat, tapping his tortoiseshell snuff-box, and telling us many interesting things about the past and present state of the convent. Our company was completed with Lupo, the pet cat, and Pirro, a woolly Corsican dog, very good friends, and both enormously voracious. Lupo in particular engraved himself upon the memory of Christian, into whose large legs he thrust his claws, when the cheese-parings and

scraps were not supplied him with sufficient promptitude. I never saw a hungrier and bolder cat. It made one fancy that even the mice had been exiled from this solitude. And truly the rule of the monastic order, no less than the habit of Italian gentlemen, is frugal in the matter of the table, beyond the conception of northern folk.

Monte Oliveto, the Superior told us, owned thirty-two *poderi*, or large farms, of which five have recently been sold. They are worked on the *mezzeria* system; whereby peasants and proprietors divide the produce of the soil; and which he thinks inferior for developing its resources to that of *affitto*, or leaseholding.

The *contadini* live in scattered houses; and he says the estate would be greatly improved by doubling the number of these dwellings, and letting the subdivided farms to more energetic people. The village of Chiusure is inhabited by labourers. The *contadini* are poor: a dower, for instance, of fifty *lire* is thought something: whereas near Genoa, upon the leasehold system, a farmer may sometimes provide a dower of twenty thousand *lire*. The country produces grain of different sorts, excellent oil, and timber. It also yields a tolerable red wine. The Government makes from eight to nine per cent. upon the value of the land, employing him and his two religious brethren as agents.

In such conversation the evening passed. We rested well in large hard beds with dry rough sheets. But there was a fretful wind abroad, which went wailing round the convent walls and rattling the doors in its deserted corridors. One of our party had been placed by himself at the end of a long suite of apartments, with balconies commanding the wide sweep of hills that Monte Amiata crowns. He confessed in the morning to having passed a restless night, tormented by the ghostly noises of the wind, a wanderer, 'like the

world's rejected guest,' through those untenanted chambers. The olives tossed their filmy boughs in twilight underneath his windows, sighing and shuddering, with a sheen in them as eerie as that of willows by some haunted mere.

IV

The great attraction to students of Italian art in the convent of Monte Oliveto is a large square cloister, covered with wall-paintings by Luca Signorelli and Giovannantonio Bazzi, surnamed Il Sodoma. These represent various episodes in the life of S. Benedict; while one picture, in some respects the best of the whole series, is devoted to the founder of the Olivetan Order, Bernardo Tolomei, dispensing the rule of his institution to a consistory of white-robed monks. Signorelli, that great master of Cortona, may be studied to better advantage elsewhere, especially at Orvieto and in his native city. His work in this cloister, consisting of eight frescoes, has been much spoiled by time and restoration. Yet it can be referred to a good period of his artistic activity (the year 1497) and displays much which is specially characteristic of his manner. In Totila's barbaric train, he painted a crowd of fierce emphatic figures, combining all ages and the most varied attitudes, and reproducing with singular vividness the Italian soldiers of adventure of his day. We see before us the long-haired followers of Braccio and the Baglioni; their handsome savage faces; their brawny limbs clad in the particoloured hose and jackets of that period; feathered caps stuck sideways on their heads; a splendid swagger in their straddling legs. Female beauty lay outside the sphere of Signorelli's sympathy; and in the Monte Oliveto cloister he was not called upon to paint it. But none of the Italian masters felt more keenly, or more powerfully

represented in their work, the muscular vigour of young manhood. Two of the remaining frescoes, different from these in motive, might be selected as no less characteristic of Signorelli's manner. One represents three sturdy monks, clad in brown, working with all their strength to stir a boulder, which has been bewitched, and needs a miracle to move it from its place. The square and powerfully outlined drawing of these figures is beyond all praise for its effect of massive solidity. The other shows us the interior of a fifteenth-century tavern, where two monks are regaling themselves upon the sly. A country girl, with shapely arms and shoulders, her upper skirts tucked round the ample waist to which broad sweeping lines of back and breasts descend, is serving wine. The exuberance of animal life, the freedom of attitude expressed in this, the mainly interesting figure of the composition, show that Signorelli might have been a great master of realistic painting. Nor are the accessories less effective. A wide-roofed kitchen chimney, a page-boy leaving the room by a flight of steps which leads to the house door, and the table at which the truant monks are seated, complete a picture of homely Italian life. It may still be matched out of many an inn in this hill district.

Called to graver work at Orvieto, where he painted his gigantic series of frescoes illustrating the coming of Antichrist, the Destruction of the World, the Resurrection, the Last Judgment, and the final state of souls in Paradise and Hell, Signorelli left his work at Monte Oliveto unaccomplished. Seven years later it was taken up by a painter of very different genius. Sodoma was a native of Vercelli, and had received his first training in the Lombard schools, which owed so much to Lionardo da Vinci's influence. He was about thirty years of age when chance brought him to Siena. Here he made acquaintance with Pandolfo Petrucci, who had

recently established himself in a species of tyranny over the Republic. The work he did for this patron and other nobles of Siena, brought him into notice. Vasari observes that his hot Lombard colouring, a something florid and attractive in his style, which contrasted with the severity of the Tuscan school, rendered him no less agreeable as an artist than his free manners made him acceptable as a house-friend. Fra Domenico da Leccio, also a Lombard, was at that time General of the monks of Monte Oliveto. On a visit to this compatriot in 1505, Sodoma received a commission to complete the cloister; and during the next two years he worked there, producing in all twenty-five frescoes. For his pains he seemed to have received but little pay—Vasari says, only the expenses of some colour-grinders who assisted him; but from the books of the convent it appears that 241 ducats, or something over 60% of our money, were disbursed to him.

Sodoma was so singular a fellow, even in that age of piquant personalities, that it may be worth while to translate a fragment of Vasari's gossip about him. We must, however, bear in mind that, for some unknown reason, the Aretine historian bore a rancorous grudge against this Lombard whose splendid gifts and great achievements he did all he could by writing to depreciate. 'He was fond,' says Vasari, 'of keeping in his house all sorts of strange animals: badgers, squirrels, monkeys, cat-a-mountains, dwarf-donkeys, horses, racers, little Elba ponies, jackdaws, bantams, doves of India, and other creatures of this kind, as many as he could lay his hands on. Over and above these beasts, he had a raven, which had learned so well from him to talk, that it could imitate its master's voice, especially in answering the door when some one knocked, and this it did so cleverly that people took it for Giovannantonio himself, as all the folk of Siena know quite well. In like manner, his other pets were

so much at home with him that they never left his house, but played the strangest tricks and maddest pranks imaginable, so that his house was like nothing more than a Noah's Ark.' He was a bold rider, it seems; for with one of his racers, ridden by himself, he bore away the prize in that wild horse-race they run upon the Piazza at Siena. For the rest, 'he attired himself in pompous clothes, wearing doublets of brocade, cloaks trimmed with gold lace, gorgeous caps, neck-chains, and other vanities of a like description, fit for buffoons and mountebanks.' In one of the frescoes of Monte Oliveto, Sodoma painted his own portrait, with some of his curious pets around him. He there appears as a young man with large and decidedly handsome features, a great shock of dark curled hair escaping from a yellow cap, and flowing down over a rich mantle which drapes his shoulders. If we may trust Vasari, he showed his curious humours freely to the monks. 'Nobody could describe the amusement he furnished to those good fathers, who christened him Mattaccio (the big madman), or the insane tricks he played there.'

In spite of Vasari's malevolence, the portrait he has given us of Bazzi has so far nothing unpleasant about it. The man seems to have been a madcap artist, combining with his love for his profession a taste for fine clothes, and what was then perhaps rarer in people of his sort, a great partiality for living creatures of all kinds. The darker shades of Vasari's picture have been purposely omitted from these pages. We only know for certain, about Bazzi's private life, that he was married in 1510 to a certain Beatrice, who bore him two children, and who was still living with him in 1541. The further suggestion that he painted at Monte Oliveto subjects unworthy of a religious house, is wholly disproved by the frescoes which still exist in a state of very tolerable preservation. They represent various episodes in the legend of S.

Benedict ; all marked by that spirit of simple, almost childish piety which is a special characteristic of Italian religious history. The series forms, in fact, a painted *novella* of monastic life ; its petty jealousies, its petty trials, its tribulations and temptations, and its indescribably petty miracles. Bazzi was well fitted for the execution of this task. He had a swift and facile brush, considerable versatility in the treatment of monotonous subjects, and a never-failing sense of humour. His white-cowled monks, some of them with the rosy freshness of boys, some with the handsome brown faces of middle life, others astute and crafty, others again wrinkled with old age, have clearly been copied from real models. He puts them into action without the slightest effort, and surrounds them with landscapes, architecture, and furniture, appropriate to each successive situation. The whole is done with so much grace, such simplicity of composition, and transparency of style, corresponding to the *naïf* and superficial legend, that we feel a perfect harmony between the artist's mind and the motives he was made to handle. In this respect Bazzi's portion of the legend of S. Benedict is more successful than Signorelli's. It was fortunate, perhaps, that the conditions of his task confined him to uncomplicated groupings, and a scale of colour in which white predominates. For Bazzi, as is shown by subsequent work in the Farnesina Villa at Rome, and in the church of S. Domenico at Siena, was no master of composition ; and the tone, even of his masterpieces, inclines to heat. Unlike Signorelli, Bazzi felt a deep artistic sympathy with female beauty ; and the most attractive fresco in the whole series is that in which the evil monk Florentius brings a bevy of fair damsels to the convent. There is one group, in particular, of six women, so delicately varied in carriage of the head and suggested movement of the body, as to be comparable only to a strain of concerted

music. This is perhaps the painter's masterpiece in the rendering of pure beauty, if we except his S. Sebastian of the Uffizzi.

We tire of studying pictures, hardly less than of reading about them! I was glad enough, after three hours spent among the frescoes of this cloister, to wander forth into the copses which surround the convent. Sunlight was streaming treacherously from flying clouds; and though it was high noon, the oak-leaves were still a-tremble with dew. Pink cyclamens and yellow amaryllis starred the moist brown earth; and under the cypress-trees, where alleys had been cut in former time for pious feet, the short firm turf was soft and mossy. Before bidding the hospitable Padre farewell, and starting in our waggonette for Asciano, it was pleasant to meditate awhile in these green solitudes. Generations of white-stoled monks who had sat or knelt upon the now deserted terraces, or had slowly paced the winding paths to Calvaries aloft and points of vantage high above the wood, rose up before me. My mind, still full of Bazzi's frescoes, peopled the wilderness with grave monastic forms, and gracious, young-eyed faces of boyish novices.

MONTEPULCIANO

I

FOR the sake of intending travellers to this, the lordliest of Tuscan hill-towns, it will be well to state at once and without circumlocution what does not appear upon the time-tables of the line from Empoli to Rome. Montepulciano has a station; but this railway station is at the distance of at least an hour and a half's drive from the mountain upon which the city stands.

The lumbering train which brought us one October evening from Asciano crawled into this station after dark, at the very moment when a storm, which had been gathering from the south-west, burst in deluges of rain and lightning. There was, however, a covered carriage going to the town. Into this we packed ourselves, together with a polite Italian gentleman who, in answer to our questions, consulted his watch, and smilingly replied that a little half-hour would bring us easily to Montepulciano. He was a native of the place. He knew perfectly well that he would be shut up with us in that carriage for two mortal hours of darkness and downpour. And yet, such is the irresistible impulse in Italians to say something immediately agreeable, he fed us with false hopes and had no fear of consequences. What did it matter to him if we were pulling out our watches and chattering in well-contented undertone about *vino nobile*, *biftek*, and possibly a *pollo arrosto*, or a dish of *tordi*? At

the end of the half-hour, as he was well aware, self-congratulations and visions of a hearty supper would turn to discontented wailings, and the querulous complaining of defrauded appetites. But the end of half an hour was still half an hour off; and we meanwhile were comfortable.

The night was pitchy dark, and blazing flashes of lightning showed a white ascending road at intervals. Rain rushed in torrents, splashing against the carriage wheels, which moved uneasily, as though they could but scarcely stem the river that swept down upon them. Far away above us to the left, was one light on a hill, which never seemed to get any nearer. We could see nothing but a chasm of blackness below us on one side, edged with ghostly olive-trees, and a high bank on the other. Sometimes a star swam out of the drifting clouds; but then the rain hissed down again, and the flashes came in floods of livid light, illuminating the eternal olives and the cypresses which looked like huge black spectres. It seemed almost impossible for the horses to keep their feet, as the mountain road grew ever steeper and the torrent swelled around them. Still they struggled on. The promised half-hour had been doubled, trebled, quadrupled, when at last we saw the great brown sombre walls of a city tower above us. Then we entered one of those narrow lofty Tuscan gates, and rolled upon the pavement of a street.

The inn at Montepulciano is called Marzocco, after the Florentine lion which stands upon its column in a little square before the house. The people there are hospitable, and more than once on subsequent occasions have they extended to us kindly welcome. But on this, our first appearance, they had scanty room at their disposal. Seeing us arrive so late, and march into their dining-room, laden with sealskins, waterproofs, and ulsters, one of the party

hugging a complete Euripides in Didot's huge edition, they were confounded. At last they conducted the whole company of four into a narrow back bedroom, where they pointed to one fair-sized and one very little bed. This was the only room at liberty, they said; and could we not arrange to sleep here? *S' accomodi, Signore! S' accomodi, Signora!* These encouraging words, uttered in various tones of cheerful and insinuating politeness to each member of the party in succession, failed to make us comprehend how a gentleman and his wife, with a lean but rather lengthy English friend, and a bulky native of the Grisons, could 'accommodate themselves' collectively and undividedly with what was barely sufficient for their just moiety, however much it might afford a night's rest to their worse half. Christian was sent out into the storm to look for supplementary rooms in Montepulciano, which he failed to get. Meanwhile we ordered supper, and had the satisfaction of seeing set upon the board a huge red flask of *vino nobile*. In copious draughts of this the King of Tuscan wines, we drowned our cares; and when the cloth was drawn, our friend and Christian passed their night upon the supper table. The good folk of the inn had recovered from their surprise, and from the inner recesses of their house had brought forth mattresses and blankets. So the better and larger half of the company enjoyed sound sleep.

It rained itself out at night, and the morning was clear, with the transparent atmosphere of storm-clouds hurrying in broken squadrons from the bad sea quarter. Yet this is just the weather in which Tuscan landscape looks its loveliest. Those immense expanses of grey undulating uplands need the luminousness of watery sunshine, the colour added by cloud-shadows, and the pearly softness of rising vapours, to rob them of a certain awful grimness. The main street of Montepulciano goes straight uphill for a considerable distance

between brown palaces ; then mounts by a staircase-zigzag under huge impending masses of masonry ; until it ends in a piazza. On the ascent, at intervals, the eye is fascinated by prospects to the north and east over Val di Chiana, Cortona, Thrasymene, Chiusi ; to south and west over Monte Cetona, Radicofani, Monte Amiata, the Val d' Ombrone, and the Sienese Contado. Grey walls overgrown with ivy, arcades of time-toned brick, and the forbidding bulk of houses hewn from solid travertine, frame these glimpses of aërial space. The piazza is the top of all things. Here are the Duomo ; the Palazzo del Comune, closely resembling that of Florence, with the Marzocco on its front ; the fountain, between two quaintly sculptured columns ; and the vast palace Del Monte, of heavy Renaissance architecture, said to be the work of Antonio di San Gallo.

We climbed the tower of the Palazzo del Comune, and stood at the altitude of 2000 feet above the sea. The view is finer in its kind than I have elsewhere seen, even in Tuscany, that land of panoramic prospects over memorable tracts of world-historic country. Such landscape cannot be described in words. But the worst is that, even while we gaze, we know that nothing but the faintest memory of our enjoyment will be carried home with us. The atmospheric conditions were perfect that morning. The sun was still young ; the sky sparkled after the night's thunderstorm ; the whole immensity of earth around lay lucid, smiling, newly washed in baths of moisture. Masses of storm-cloud kept rolling from the west, where we seemed to feel the sea behind those intervening hills. But they did not form in heavy blocks or hang upon the mountain summits. They hurried and dispersed and changed and flung their shadows on the world below.

II

The charm of this view is composed of so many different elements, so subtly blent, appealing to so many separate sensibilities ; the sense of grandeur, the sense of space, the sense of natural beauty, and the sense of human pathos ; that deep internal faculty we call historic sense ; that it cannot be defined. First comes the immense surrounding space—a space measured in each arc of the circumference by sections of at least fifty miles, limited by points of exquisitely picturesque beauty, including distant cloud-like mountain ranges and crystals of sky-blue Apennines, circumscribing landscapes of refined loveliness in detail, always varied, always marked by objects of peculiar interest where the eye or memory may linger. Next in importance to this immensity of space, so powerfully affecting the imagination by its mere extent, and by the breadth of atmosphere attuning all varieties of form and colour to one harmony beneath illimitable heaven, may be reckoned the episodes of rivers, lakes, hills, cities, with old historic names. For there spreads the lordly length of Thrasymene, islanded and citadelled, in hazy morning mist, still dreaming of the shock of Roman hosts with Carthaginian legions. There is the lake of Chiusi, set like a jewel underneath the copse-clad hills which hide the dust of a dead Tuscan nation. The streams of Arno start far far away, where Arezzo lies enfolded in bare uplands. And there at our feet rolls Tiber's largest affluent, the Chiana. And there is the canal which joins their fountains in the marsh that Lionardo would have drained. Monte Cetona is yonder height which rears its bristling ridge defiantly from neighbouring Chiusi. And there springs Radicofani, the eagle's eyrie of a brigand brood. Next, Monte Amiata stretches the long lines of her antique volcano ; the swelling mountain flanks,

descending gently from her cloud-capped top, are russet with autumnal oak and chestnut woods. On them our eyes rest lovingly; imagination wanders for a moment through those mossy glades, where cyclamens are growing now, and prim-roses in spring will peep amid anemones from rustling foliage strewn by winter's winds. The heights of Casentino, the Perugian highlands, Volterra, far withdrawn amid a wilderness of rolling hills, and solemn snow-touched ranges of the Spolentino, Sibyl-haunted fastnesses of Norcia, form the most distant horizon-lines of this unending panorama. And then there are the cities placed each upon a point of vantage: Siena; olive-mantled Chiusi; Cortona, white upon her spreading throne; poetic Montalcino, lifted aloft against the vaporous sky; San Quirico, nestling in pastoral tranquillity; Pienza, where Æneas Sylvius built palaces and called his birthplace after his own Papal name. Still closer to the town itself of Montepulciano, stretching along the irregular ridge which gave it building ground, and trending out on spurs above deep orchards, come the lovely details of oak-copses, blending with grey tilth and fields rich with olive and vine. The gaze, exhausted with immensity, pierces those deeply cloven valleys, sheltered from wind and open to the sun—undulating folds of brown earth, where Bacchus, when he visited Tuscany, found the grape-juice that pleased him best, and crowned the wine of Montepulciano king. Here from our eyrie we can trace white oxen on the furrows, guided by brown-limbed, white-shirted contadini.

The morning glory of this view from Montepulciano, though irrecoverable by words, abides in the memory, and draws one back by its unique attractiveness. On a subsequent visit to the town in springtime, my wife and I took a twilight walk, just after our arrival, through its gloomy fortress streets, up to the piazza, where the impendent houses

lowered like bastions, and all the masses of their mighty architecture stood revealed in shadow and dim lamplight. Far and wide, the country round us gleamed with bonfires ; for it was the eve of the Ascension, when every contadino lights a beacon of chestnut logs and straw and piled-up leaves. Each castello on the plain, each village on the hills, each lonely farmhouse at the skirt of forest or the edge of lake, smouldered like a red Cyclopean eye beneath the vault of stars. The flames waxed and waned, leapt into tongues, or disappeared. As they passed from gloom to brilliancy and died away again, they seemed almost to move. The twilight scene was like that of a vast city, filling the plain and climbing the heights in terraces. Is this custom, I thought, a relic of old Pales-worship ?

III

The early history of Montepulciano is buried in impenetrable mists of fable. No one can assign a date to the foundation of these high-hill cities. The eminence on which it stands belongs to the volcanic system of Monte Amiata, and must at some time have formed a portion of the crater which threw that mighty mass aloft. But æons have passed since the *gran sasso di Maremma* was a fire-vomiting monster, glaring like Etna in eruption on the Tyrrhene sea ; and through those centuries how many races may have camped upon the summit we call Montepulciano ! Tradition assigns the first quasi-historical settlement to Lars Porsena, who is said to have made it his summer residence, when the lower and more marshy air of Clusium became oppressive. Certainly it must have been a considerable town in the Etruscan period. Embedded in the walls of palaces may still be seen numerous fragments of sculptured basreliefs, the works of that mysterious people. Apropos of Montepulciano's importance

in the early years of Roman history, I lighted on a quaint story related by its very jejune annalist, Spinello Benci. It will be remembered that Livy attributes the invasion of the Gauls, who, after besieging Clusium, advanced on Rome, to the persuasions of a certain Aruns. He was an exile from Clusium; and wishing to revenge himself upon his country-people, he allured the Senonian Gauls into his service by the promise of excellent wine, samples of which he had taken with him into Lombardy. Spinello Benci accepts the legend literally, and continues: 'These wines were so pleasing to the palate of the barbarians, that they were induced to quit the rich and teeming valley of the Po, to cross the Apennines, and move in battle array against Chiusi. And it is clear that the wine which Aruns selected for the purpose was the same as that which is produced to this day at Montepulciano. For nowhere else in the Etruscan district can wines of equally generous quality and fiery spirit be found, so adapted for export and capable of such long preservation.'

We may smile at the historian's *naïveté*. Yet the fact remains that good wine of Montepulciano can still allure barbarians of this epoch to the spot where it is grown. Of all Italian vintages, with the exception of some rare qualities of Sicily and the Valtellina, it is, in my humble opinion, the best. And when the time comes for Italy to develop the resources of her vineyards upon scientific principles, Montepulciano will drive Brolio from the field and take the same place by the side of Chianti which Volnay occupies by common Macon. It will then be quoted upon wine-lists throughout Europe, and find its place upon the tables of rich epicures in Hyperborean regions, and add its generous warmth to Transatlantic banquets. Even as it is now made, with very little care bestowed on cultivation and none to speak of on selection of the grape, the wine is rich and noble, slightly rough to a

sophisticated palate, but clean in quality and powerful and racy. It deserves the enthusiasm attributed by Redi to Bacchus :¹

Fill, fill, let us all have our will !
But with *what*, with *what*, boys, shall we fill ?
Sweet Ariadne—no, not *that* one—*ah* no ;
Fill me the manna of Montepulciano :
Fill me a magnum and reach it me.—Gods !
How it glides to my heart by the sweetest of roads !
Oh, how it kisses me, tickles me, bites me !
Oh, how my eyes loosen sweetly in tears !
I'm ravished ! I'm rapt ! Heaven finds me admissible !
Lost in an ecstasy ! blinded ! invisible !—
Hearken all earth !
We, Bacchus, in the might of our great mirth,
To all who reverence us, are right thinkers ;
Hear, all ye drinkers !
Give ear and give faith to the edict divine ;
Montepulciano's the King of all wine.

It is necessary, however, that our modern barbarian should travel to Montepulciano itself, and there obtain a flask of *manna* or *vino nobile* from some trusty cellar-master. He will not find it bottled in the inns or restaurants upon his road.

IV

The landscape and the wine of Montepulciano are both well worth the trouble of a visit to this somewhat inaccessible city. Yet more remains to be said about the attractions of the town itself. In the Duomo, which was spoiled by unintelligent rebuilding at a dismal epoch of barren art, are fragments of one of the rarest monuments of Tuscan sculpture. This is the tomb of Bartolommeo Aragazzi. He was a native of Montepulciano, and secretary to Pope Martin V., that *Papa*

¹ From Leigh Hunt's Translation.

Martino non vale un quattrino, on whom, during his long residence in Florence, the street-boys made their rhymes. Twelve years before his death he commissioned Donatello and Michelozzo Michelozzi, who about that period were working together upon the monuments of Pope John XXIII. and Cardinal Brancacci, to erect his own tomb at the enormous cost of twenty-four thousand scudi. That thirst for immortality of fame, which inspired the humanists of the Renaissance, prompted Aragazzi to this princely expenditure. Yet, having somehow won the hatred of his fellow-students, he was immediately censured for excessive vanity. Lionardo Bruni makes his monument the theme of a ferocious onslaught. Writing to Poggio Bracciolini, Bruni tells a story how, while travelling through the country of Arezzo, he met a train of oxen dragging heavy waggons piled with marble columns, statues, and all the necessary details of a sumptuous sepulchre. He stopped, and asked what it all meant. Then one of the contractors for this transport, wiping the sweat from his forehead, in utter weariness of the vexatious labour, at the last end of his temper, answered: 'May the gods destroy all poets, past, present, and future.' I inquired what he had to do with poets, and how they had annoyed him. 'Just this,' he replied, 'that this poet, lately deceased, a fool and windy-pated fellow, has ordered a monument for himself; and with a view to erecting it, these marbles are being dragged to Montepulciano; but I doubt whether we shall contrive to get them up there. The roads are too bad.' 'But,' cried I, 'do you believe *that* man was a poet—that dunce who had no science, nay, nor knowledge either? who only rose above the heads of men by vanity and doltishness?' 'I don't know,' he answered, 'nor did I ever hear tell, while he was alive, about his being called a poet; but his fellow-townsmen now decide he was one; nay, if he had but left a few more money-

bags, they'd swear he was a god. Anyhow, but for his having been a poet, I would not have cursed poets in general.' Whereupon, the malevolent Bruni withdrew, and composed a scorpion-tailed oration, addressed to his friend Poggio, on the suggested theme of 'diuturnity in monuments,' and false ambition. Our old friends of humanistic learning—Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar—meet us in these frothy paragraphs. Cambyeses, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, Darius, are thrown in to make the gruel of rhetoric 'thick and slab.' The whole epistle ends in a long-drawn peroration of invective against 'that excrement in human shape,' who had had the ill-luck, by pretence to scholarship, by big gains from the Papal treasury, by something in his manners alien from the easy-going customs of the Roman Court, to rouse the rancour of his fellow-humanists.

I have dwelt upon this episode, partly because it illustrates the peculiar thirst for glory in the students of that time, but more especially because it casts a thin clear thread of actual light upon the masterpiece which, having been transported with this difficulty from Donatello's workshop, is now to be seen by all lovers of fine art, in part at least, at Montepulciano. In part at least: the phrase is pathetic. Poor Aragazzi, who thirsted so for 'diuturnity in monuments,' who had been so cruelly assaulted in the grave by humanistic jealousy, expressing its malevolence with humanistic crudity of satire, was destined after all to be defrauded of his well-paid tomb. The monument, a master work of Donatello and his collaborator, was duly erected. The oxen and the contractors, it appears, had floundered through the mud of Valdichiana, and struggled up the mountain-slopes of Montepulciano. But when the church, which this triumph of art adorned, came to be repaired, the miracle of beauty was dismembered. The sculpture for which Aragazzi spent his thousands of crowns, which Donatello touched with his immortalising chisel, over

which the contractors vented their curses and Bruni eased his bile; these marbles are now visible as mere *disjecta membra* in a church which, lacking them, has little to detain a traveller's haste.

On the left hand of the central door, as you enter, Aragazzi lies, in senatorial robes, asleep; his head turned slightly to the right upon the pillow, his hands folded over his breast. Very noble are the draperies, and dignified the deep tranquillity of slumber. Here, we say, is a good man fallen upon sleep, awaiting resurrection. The one commanding theme of Christian sculpture, in an age of Pagan feeling, has been adequately rendered. Bartolommeo Aragazzi, like Ilaria led Carretto at Lucca, like the canopied doges in S. Zanipolo at Venice, like the Acciaiuoli in the Florentine Certosa, like the Cardinal di Portogallo in Samminiato, is carved for us as he had been in life, but with that life suspended, its fever all smoothed out, its agitations over, its pettinesses dignified by death. This marmoreal repose of the once active man symbolises for our imagination the state into which he passed four centuries ago, but in which, according to the creed, he still abides, reserved for judgment and re-incarnation. The flesh, clad with which he walked our earth, may moulder in the vaults beneath. But it will one day rise again; and art has here presented it imperishable to our gaze. This is how the Christian sculptors, inspired by the majestic calm of classic art, dedicated a Christian to the genius of repose. Among the nations of antiquity this repose of death was eternal; and being unable to conceive of a man's body otherwise than for ever obliterated by the flames of funeral, they were perforce led back to actual life when they would carve his portrait on a tomb. But for Christianity the rest of the grave has ceased to be eternal. Centuries may pass, but in the end it must be broken. Therefore art is justified in

showing us the man himself in an imagined state of sleep. Yet this imagined state of sleep is so incalculably long, and by the will of God withdrawn from human prophecy, that the ages sweeping over the dead man before the trumpets of archangels wake him, shall sooner wear away memorial stone than stir his slumber. It is a slumber, too, unterrified, unentertained by dreams. Suspended animation finds no fuller symbolism than the sculptor here presents to us in abstract form.

The boys of Montepulciano have scratched Messer Aragazzi's sleeping figure with *graffiti* at their own free will. Yet they have had no power to erase the poetry of Donatello's mighty style. That, in spite of Bruni's envy, in spite of injurious time, in spite of the still worse insult of the modernised cathedral and the desecrated monument, embalms him in our memory and secures for him the diuturnity for which he paid his twenty thousand crowns. Money, methinks, beholding him, was rarely better expended on a similar ambition. And ambition of this sort, relying on the genius of such a master to give it wings for perpetuity of time, is, *pace* Lionardo Bruni, not ignoble.

Opposite the figure of Messer Aragazzi are two square basreliefs from the same monument, fixed against piers, of the nave. One represents Madonna enthroned among worshippers; members, it may be supposed, of Aragazzi's household. Three angelic children, supporting the child Christ upon her lap, complete that pyramidal form of composition which Fra Bartolommeo was afterwards to use with such effect in painting. The other basrelief shows a group of grave men and youths, clasping hands with loveliest interlacement; the placid sentiment of human fellowship translated into harmonies of sculptured form. Children below run up to touch their knees, and reach out boyish

arms to welcome them. Two young men, with half-draped busts and waving hair blown off their foreheads, anticipate the type of adolescence which Andrea del Sarto perfected in his *S. John*. We might imagine that this masterly panel was intended to represent the arrival of Messer Aragazzi in his home. It is a scene from the domestic life of the dead man, duly subordinated to the recumbent figure, which, when the monument was perfect, would have dominated the whole composition.

Nothing in the range of Donatello's work surpasses these two bas-reliefs for harmonies of line and grouping, for choice of form, for beauty of expression, and for smoothness of surface-working. The marble is of great delicacy, and is wrought to a wax-like surface. At the high altar are three more fragments from the mutilated tomb. One is a long low frieze of children bearing garlands, which probably formed the base of Aragazzi's monument, and now serves for a *predella*. The remaining pieces are detached statues of Fortitude and Faith. The former reminds us of Donatello's *S. George*; the latter is twisted into a strained attitude, full of character, but lacking grace. What the effect of these emblematic figures would have been when harmonised by the architectural proportions of the sepulchre, the repose of Aragazzi on his sarcophagus, the suavity of the two square panels and the rhythmic beauty of the frieze, it is not easy to conjecture. But rudely severed from their surroundings, and exposed in isolation, one at each side of the altar, they leave an impression of awkward discomfort on the memory. A certain hardness, peculiar to the Florentine manner, is felt in them. But this quality may have been intended by the sculptors for the sake of contrast with what is eminently graceful, peaceful, and melodious in the other fragments of the ruined masterpiece.

V

At a certain point in the main street, rather more than halfway from the Albergo del Marzocco to the piazza, a tablet has been let into the wall upon the left-hand side. This records the fact that here in 1454 was born Angelo Ambrogini, the special glory of Montepulciano, the greatest classical scholar and the greatest Italian poet of the fifteenth century. He is better known in the history of literature as Poliziano, or Politianus, a name he took from his native city, when he came, a marvellous boy, at the age of ten, to Florence, and joined the household of Lorenzo de' Medici. He had already claims upon Lorenzo's hospitality. For his father, Benedetto, by adopting the cause of Piero de' Medici in Montepulciano, had exposed himself to bitter feuds and hatred of his fellow-citizens. To this animosity of party warfare he fell a victim a few years previously. We only know that he was murdered, and that he left a helpless widow with five children, of whom Angelo was the eldest. The Ambrogini or Cini were a family of some importance in Montepulciano; and their dwelling-house is a palace of considerable size. From its eastern windows the eye can sweep that vast expanse of country, embracing the lakes of Thrasymene and Chiusi, which has been already described. What would have happened, we wonder, if Messer Benedetto, the learned jurist, had not espoused the Medicean cause and embroiled himself with murderous antagonists? Would the little Angelo have grown up in this quiet town, and practised law, and lived and died a citizen of Montepulciano? In that case the lecture-rooms of Florence would never have echoed to the sonorous hexameters of the 'Rusticus' and 'Ambra.' Italian literature would have lacked the 'Stanze' and 'Orfeo.' European scholarship would have been defrauded

of the impulse given to it by the 'Miscellanea.' The study of Roman law would have missed those labours on the Pandects, with which the name of Politian is honourably associated. From the Florentine society of the fifteenth century would have disappeared the commanding central figure of humanism, which now contrasts dramatically with the stern monastic Prior of S. Mark. Benedetto's tragic death gave Poliziano to Italy and to posterity.

VI

Those who have a day to spare at Montepulciano can scarcely spend it better than in an excursion to Pienza and San Quirico. Leaving the city by the road which takes a westerly direction, the first object of interest is the Church of San Biagio, placed on a fertile plateau immediately beneath the ancient acropolis. It was erected by Antonio di San Gallo in 1518, and is one of the most perfect specimens existing of the sober classical style. The Church consists of a Greek square, continued at the east end into a semicircular tribune, surmounted by a central cupola, and flanked by a detached bell-tower, ending in a pyramidal spire. The whole is built of solid yellow travertine, a material which, by its warmth of colour, is pleasing to the eye, and mitigates the mathematical severity of the design. Upon entering, we feel at once what Alberti called the music of this style; its large and simple harmonies, depending for effect upon sincerity of plan and justice of balance. The square masses of the main building, the projecting cornices and rounded tribune, meet together and soar up into the cupola; while the grand but austere proportions of the arches and the piers compose a symphony of perfectly concordant lines. The music is grave and solemn, architecturally expressed in terms of measured

space and outlined symmetry. The whole effect is that of one thing pleasant to look upon, agreeably appealing to our sense of unity, charming us by grace and repose; not stimulative nor suggestive, not multiform nor mysterious. We are reminded of the temples imagined by Francesco Colonna, and figured in his *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. One of these shrines has, we feel, come into actual existence here; and the religious ceremonies for which it is adapted are not those of the Christian worship. Some more primitive, less spiritual rites, involving less of tragic awe and deep-wrought symbolism, should be here performed. It is better suited for Polifilo's lustration by Venus Physizoe than for the mass on Easter morning. And in this respect, the sentiment of the architecture is exactly faithful to that mood of religious feeling which appeared in Italy under the influences of the classical revival—when the essential doctrines of Christianity were blurred with Pantheism; when Jehovah became *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*; and Jesus was the *Heros* of Calvary, and nuns were *Virgines Vestales*. In literature this mood often strikes us as insincere and artificial. But it admitted of realisation and showed itself to be profoundly felt in architecture.

After leaving Madonna di San Biagio, the road strikes at once into an open country, expanding on the right towards the woody ridge of Monte Fallonica, on the left toward Cetona and Radicofani, with Monte Amiata full in front—its double crest and long volcanic slope recalling Etna; the belt of embrowned forest on its flank, made luminous by sunlight. Far away stretches the Sienese Maremma; Siena dimly visible upon her gentle hill; and still beyond, the pyramid of Volterra, huge and cloud-like, piled against the sky. The road, as is almost invariable in this district, keeps to the highest line of ridges, winding much, and following

the dimplings of the earthy hills. Here and there a solitary castello, rusty with old age, and turned into a farm, juts into picturesqueness from some point of vantage on a mound surrounded with green tillage. But soon the dull and intolerable *creta*, ash-grey earth, without a vestige of vegetation, furrowed by rain, and desolately breaking into gullies, swallows up variety and charm. It is difficult to believe that this *creta* of Southern Tuscany, which has all the appearance of barrenness, and is a positive deformity in the landscape, can be really fruitful. Yet we are frequently being told that it only needs assiduous labour to render it enormously productive.

When we reached Pienza we were already in the middle of a country without cultivation, abandoned to the marl. It is a little place, perched upon the ledge of a long sliding hill, which commands the vale of Orcia; Monte Amiata soaring in ærial majesty beyond. Its old name was Cosignano. But it had the honour of giving birth to Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who, when he was elected to the Papacy and had assumed the title of Pius II., determined to transform and dignify his native village, and to call it after his own name. From that time forward Cosignano has been known as Pienza.

Pius II. succeeded effectually in leaving his mark upon the town. And this forms its main interest at the present time. We see in Pienza how the most active-minded and intelligent man of his epoch, the representative genius of Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century, commanding vast wealth and the Pontifical prestige, worked out his whim of city-building. The experiment had to be made upon a small scale; for Pienza was then and was destined to remain a village. Yet here, upon this miniature piazza—in modern as in ancient Italy the meeting-point of civic life, the forum—

we find a cathedral, a palace of the bishop, a palace of the feudal lord, and a palace of the commune, arranged upon a well-considered plan, and executed after one design in a consistent style. The religious, municipal, signorial, and ecclesiastical functions of the little town are centralised around the open market-place, on which the common people transacted business and discussed affairs. Pius entrusted the realisation of his scheme to a Florentine architect; whether Bernardo Rossellino, or a certain Bernardo di Lorenzo, is still uncertain. The same artist, working in the flat manner of Florentine domestic architecture, with rusticated basements, rounded windows and bold projecting cornices—the manner which is so nobly illustrated by the Rucellai and Strozzi palaces at Florence—executed also for Pius the monumental Palazzo Piccolomini at Siena. It is a great misfortune for the group of buildings he designed at Pienza, that they are huddled together in close quarters on a square too small for their effect. A want of space is peculiarly injurious to the architecture of this date, 1462, which, itself geometrical and spatial, demands a certain harmony and liberty in its surroundings, a proportion between the room occupied by each building and the masses of the edifice. The style is severe and prosaic. Those charming episodes and accidents of fancy, in which the Gothic style and the style of the earlier Lombard Renaissance abounded, are wholly wanting to the rigid, mathematical, hard-headed genius of the Florentine quattrocento. Pienza, therefore, disappoints us. Its heavy palace frontispieces shut the spirit up in a tight box. We seem unable to breathe, and lack that element of life and picturesqueness which the splendid retinues of nobles in the age of Pinturicchio might have added to the now forlorn Piazza.

Yet the material is a fine warm travertine, mellowing to

dark red, brightening to golden, with some details, especially the tower of the Palazzo Comunale, in red brick. This building, by the way, is imitated in miniature from that of Florence. The cathedral is a small church of three aisles, equally high, ending in what the French would call a *chevet*. Pius had observed this plan of construction somewhere in Austria, and commanded his architect, Bernardo, to observe it in his plan. He was attracted by the facilities for window-lighting which it offered; and what is very singular, he provided by the Bull of his foundation for keeping the walls of the interior free from frescoes and other coloured decorations. The result is that, though the interior effect is pleasing, the church presents a frigid aspect to eyes familiarised with warmth of tone in other buildings of that period. The details of the columns and friezes are classical; and the façade, strictly corresponding to the structure, and very honest in its decorative elements, is also of the earlier Renaissance style. But the vaulting and some of the windows are pointed.

The Palazzo Piccolomini, standing at the right hand of the Duomo, is a vast square edifice. The walls are flat and even, pierced at regular intervals with windows, except upon the south-west side, where the rectangular design is broken by a noble double Loggiata, gallery rising above gallery—serene curves of arches, grandly proportioned columns, massive balustrades, a spacious corridor, a roomy vaulting—opening out upon the palace garden, and offering fair prospect over the wooded heights of Castiglione and Rocca d' Orcia, up to Radicofani and shadowy Amiata. It was in these double tiers of galleries, in the garden beneath and in the open inner square of the palazzo, that the great life of Italian aristocracy displayed itself. Four centuries ago these spaces, now so desolate in their immensity, echoed to the tread of serving-men, the songs of pages; horse-hooves struck upon the pavement

of the court; spurs jingled on the staircases; the brocaded trains of ladies sweeping from their chambers rustled on the marbles of the loggia; knights let their hawks fly from the garden parapets; cardinals and abbreviators gathered round the doors from which the Pope would issue, when he rose from his siesta to take the cool of evening in those airy colonnades. How impossible it is to realise that scene amid this solitude! The palazzo still belongs to the Piccolomini family. But it has fallen into something worse than ruin—the squalor of half-starved existence, shorn of all that justified its grand proportions. Partition-walls have been run up across its halls to meet the requirements of our contracted modern customs. Nothing remains of the original decorations except one carved chimney-piece, an emblazoned shield, and a frescoed portrait of the founder. All movable treasures have been made away with. And yet the carved heraldics of the exterior, the coat of Piccolomini, ‘argent, on a cross azure five crescents or,’ the Papal ensigns, keys, and tiara, and the monogram of Pius, prove that this country dwelling of a Pope must once have been rich in details befitting its magnificence. With the exception of the very small portion reserved for the Signori, when they visit Pienza, the palace has become a granary for country produce in a starveling land. There was one redeeming point about it to my mind. That was the handsome young man, with earnest Tuscan eyes and a wonderfully sweet voice, the servant of the Piccolomini family, who lives here with his crippled father, and who showed us over the apartments.

We left Pienza and drove on to S. Quirico, through the same wrinkled wilderness of marl; wasteful, uncultivated, bare to every wind that blows. A cruel blast was sweeping from the sea, and Monte Amiata darkened with rain-clouds. Still the pictures, which formed themselves at intervals, as we

wound along these barren ridges, were very fair to look upon, especially one not far from S. Quirico. It had for foreground a stretch of tilth—olive-trees, honeysuckle hedges, and cypresses. Beyond soared Amiata in all its breadth and blue air-blackness, bearing on its mighty flanks the broken cliffs and tufted woods of Castiglione and the Rocca d' Orcia ; eagles' nests emerging from a fertile valley-champaign, into which the eye was led for rest. It so chanced that a band of sunlight, escaping from filmy clouds, touched this picture with silvery greys and soft greens—a suffusion of vaporous radiance, which made it for one moment a Claude landscape.

S. Quirico was keeping *fiesta*. The streets were crowded with healthy, handsome men and women from the contado. This village lies on the edge of a great oasis in the Sienese desert—an oasis formed by the waters of the Orcia and Asso sweeping down to join Ombrone, and stretching on to Montalcino. We put up at the sign of the 'Two Hares,' where a notable housewife gave us a dinner of all we could desire ; *frittata di cervello*, good fish, roast lamb stuffed with rosemary, salad and cheese, with excellent wine and black coffee, at the rate of three *lire* a head.

The attraction of S. Quirico is its gem-like little collegiata, a Lombard church of the ninth century, with carved portals of the thirteenth. It is built of golden travertine ; some details in brown sandstone. The western and southern portals have pillars resting on the backs of lions. On the western side these pillars are four slender columns, linked by snake-like ligatures. On the southern side they consist of two carved figures—possibly S. John and the Archangel Michael. There is great freedom and beauty in these statues, as also in the lions which support them, recalling the early French and German manner. In addition, one finds the

usual Lombard grotesques—two sea-monsters, biting each other; harpy-birds; a dragon with a twisted tail; little men grinning and squatting in adaptation to coigns and angles of the windows. The toothed and chevron patterns of the north are quaintly blent with rude acanthus scrolls and classical egg-mouldings. Over the western porch is a Gothic rose window. Altogether this church must be reckoned one of the most curious specimens of that hybrid architecture, fusing and appropriating different manners, which perplexes the student in Central Italy. It seems strangely out of place in Tuscany. Yet, if what one reads of Toscanella, a village between Viterbo and Orbetello, be true, there exist examples of a similar fantastic Lombard style even lower down.

The interior was most disastrously gutted and 'restored' in 1791: its open wooden roof masked by a false stucco vaulting. A few relics, spared by the eighteenth-century Vandals, show that the church was once rich in antique curiosities. A marble knight in armour lies on his back, half hidden by the pulpit stairs. And in the choir are half a dozen rarely beautiful panels of tarsia, executed in a bold style and on a large scale. One design—a man throwing his face back, and singing, while he plays a mandoline; with long thick hair and fanciful beretta; behind him a fine line of cypress and other trees—struck me as singularly lovely. In another I noticed a branch of peach, broad leaves and ripe fruit, not only drawn with remarkable grace and power, but so modelled as to stand out with the roundness of reality.

The whole drive of three hours back to Montepulciano was one long banquet of inimitable distant views. Next morning, having to take farewell of the place, we climbed to the Castello, or *arx* of the old city! It is a ruined spot, outside the present walls, upon the southern slope, where there is now a farm, and a fair space of short sheep-cropped turf, very green and

grassy, and gemmed with little pink geraniums as in England in such places. The walls of the old castle, overgrown with ivy, are broken down to their foundations. This may possibly have been done when Montepulciano was dismantled by the Sienese in 1232. At that date the Commune succumbed to its more powerful neighbours. The half of its inhabitants were murdered, and its fortifications were destroyed. Such episodes are common enough in the history of that internecine struggle for existence between the Italian municipalities, which preceded the more famous strife of Guelfs and Ghibellines. Stretched upon the smooth turf of the Castello, we bade adieu to the divine landscape bathed in light and mountain air—to Thrasymene and Chiusi and Cetona; to Amiata, Pienza, and S. Quirico; to Montalcino and the mountains of Volterra; to Siena and Cortona; and, closer, to Monte Fallonica, Madonna di Biagio, the house-roofs and the Palazzo tower of Montepulciano.

PERUGIA

PERUGIA is the empress of hill-set Italian cities. Southward from her high-built battlements and church towers the eye can sweep a circuit of the Apennines unrivalled in its width. From cloudlike Radicofani, above Siena in the west, to snow-capped Monte Catria, beneath whose summit Dante spent those saddest months of solitude in 1313, the mountains curve continuously in lines of austere dignity and tempered sweetness. Assisi, Spoleto, Todi, Trevi, crown lesser heights within the range of vision. Here and there the glimpse of distant rivers lights a silver spark upon the plain. Those hills conceal Lake Trasymene; and there lies Orvieto, and Ancona there: while at our feet the Umbrian champaign, breaking away into the valley of the Tiber, spreads in all the largeness of majestically converging mountain-slopes. This is a landscape which can never lose its charm. Whether it be purple golden summer, or winter with sad tints of russet woods and faintly rosy snows, or spring attired in tenderest green of new-fledged trees and budding flowers, the air is always pure and light and finely tempered here. City gates, sombre as their own antiquity, frame vistas of the laughing fields. Terraces, flanked on either side by jutting masonry, cut clear vignettes of olive-hoary slopes, with cypress-shadowed farms in hollows of the hills. Each coign or point of vantage carries a bastion or tower of Etruscan, Roman, mediæval architecture, tracing the limits of the town upon its mountain plateau. Everywhere

art and nature lie side by side in amity beneath a sky so pure and delicate, that from its limpid depth the spirit seems to drink new life. What air-tints of lilac, orange, and pale amethyst are shed upon those vast ethereal hills and undulating plains! What wandering cloud-shadows sail across this sea of olives and of vines, with here and there a fleece of vapour or a column of blue smoke from charcoal burners on the mountain flank! To southward, far away beyond those hills, is felt the presence of eternal Rome, not seen, but clearly indicated by the hurrying of a hundred streams that swell the Tiber.

In the neighbourhood of the town itself there is plenty to attract the student of antiquities, or art, or history. He may trace the walls of the Etruscan city, and explore the vaults where the dust of the Volumnii lies coffered in sarcophagi and urns. Mild faces of grave deities lean from the living tufa above those narrow alcoves, where the chisel-marks are still fresh, and where the vigilant lamps still hang suspended from the roof by leaden chains. Or, in the Museum, he may read on basreliefs and vases how gloomy and morose were the superstitions of those obscure forerunners of majestic Rome. The piazza offers one of the most perfect Gothic façades, in its Palazzo Pubblico, to be found in Italy. The flight of marble steps is guarded from above by the bronze griffin of Perugia and the Baglioni, with the bronze lion of the Guelf faction, to which the town was ever faithful. Upon their marble brackets they ramp in all the lean ferocity of feudal heraldry, and from their claws hang down the chains wrested in old warfare from some barricaded gateway of Siena. Below is the fountain, on the many-sided curves of which Giovanni Pisano sculptured, in quaint statuettes and basreliefs, all the learning of the middle ages, from the Bible history down to fables of Æsop and allegories of the several months. Facing the same piazza

is the Sala del Cambio, a mediæval Bourse, with its tribunal for the settlement of mercantile disputes, and its exquisite carved woodwork and frescoes, the masterpiece of Perugino's school. Hard by is the University, once crowded with native and foreign students, where the eloquence of Greek Demetrius in the first dawn of the Renaissance withdrew the gallants of Perugia—those slim youths with shocks of nut-brown hair beneath their tiny red caps, whose comely legs, encased in tight-fitting hose of two different colours, looked so strange to modern eyes upon the canvas of Signorelli—from their dice and wine-cups, and amours and daggers, to grave studies in the lore of Greece and Rome.

This piazza, the scene of all the bloodiest tragedies in Perugian annals, is closed at the north end by the Cathedral, with the open pulpit in its wall from which S. Bernardino of Siena preached peace in vain. The citizens wept to hear his words: a bonfire of vanities was lighted on the flags beside Pisano's fountain: foe kissed foe: and the same cowl of S. Francis was set in token of repentance on heads that long had schemed destruction, each for each. But a few days passed, and the penitents returned to cut each other's throat. Often and often have those steps of the Duomo run with blood of Baglioni, Oddi, Arcipreti, and La Staffa. Once the whole church had to be washed with wine and blessed anew before the rites of Christianity could be resumed in its desecrated aisles. It was here that within the space of two days, in 1500, the catafalque was raised for the murdered Astorre, and for his traitorous cousin Grifonetto Baglioni. Here, too, if more ancient tradition does not err, were stretched the corpses of twenty-seven members of the same great house at the end of one of their grim combats.

No Italian city illustrates more forcibly than Perugia the violent contrasts of the earlier Renaissance. This is perhaps

its most essential characteristic—that which constitutes its chief æsthetic interest. To many travellers the name of Perugia suggests at once the painter who, more than any other, gave expression to devout emotions in consummate works of pietistic art. They remember how Raphael, when a boy, with Pinturicchio, Lo Spagna, and Adone Doni, in the workshop of Pietro Perugino, learned the secret of that style to which he gave sublimity and freedom in his Madonnas di San Sisto, di Foligno, and del Cardellino. But the students of mediæval history in detail know Perugia far better as the lion's lair of one of the most ferocious broods of heroic ruffians Italy can boast. To them the name of Perugia suggests at once the great house of the Baglioni, who drenched Umbria with blood, and gave the broad fields of Assisi to the wolf, and who through six successive generations bred captains for the armies of Venice, Florence, Naples, and the Church.¹ That the trade of Perugino in religious pictures should have been carried on in the city which shared the factions of the Baglioni—that Raphael should have been painting Pietas while Astorre and Simonetto were being murdered by the beautiful young Grifonetto—is a paradox of the purest water in the history of civilisation.

The art of Perugino implied a large number of devout and wealthy patrons, a public not only capable of comprehending him, but also eager to restrict his great powers within the limits of purely devotional delineation. The feuds and passions of the Baglioni, on the other hand, implied a society in which egregious crimes only needed success to be accounted glorious, where force, cruelty, and cynical craft reigned

¹ Most of the references in this essay are made to the Perugian chronicles of Graziani, Matarazzo, Bontempi, and Froliere, in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. xvi. parts 1 and 2. Ariodante Fabretti's *Biografie dei Capitani Venturieri dell' Umbria* supply some details.

supreme, and where the animal instincts attained gigantic proportions in the persons of splendid young athletic despots. Even the names of these Baglioni, Astorre, Lavinia, Zenobia, Atalanta, Troilo, Ercole, Annibale, Ascanio, Penelope, Orazio, and so forth, clash with the sweet mild forms of Perugino, whose very executioners are candidates for Paradise, and kill their martyrs with compunction.

In Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such contradictions subsisted in the same place and under the conditions of a common culture, because there was no limit to the development of personality. Character was far more absolute then than now. The force of the modern world, working in the men of those times like powerful wine, as yet displayed itself only as a spirit of freedom and expansion and revolt. The strait laces of mediæval Christianity were loosened. The coercive action of public opinion had not yet made itself dominant. That was an age of adolescence, in which men were and dared to be *themselves* for good or evil. Hypocrisy, except for some solid, well-defined, selfish purpose, was unknown: the deference to established canons of decorum which constitutes more than half of our so-called morality, would have been scarcely intelligible to an Italian. The outlines of individuality were therefore strongly accented. Life itself was dramatic in its incidents and motives, its catastrophes and contrasts. These conditions, eminently favourable to the growth of arts and the pursuit of science, were no less conducive to the hypertrophy of passions, and to the full development of ferocious and inhuman personalities. Every man did what seemed good in his own eyes. Far less restrained than we are by the verdict of his neighbours, but bound by faith more blind and fiercer superstitions, he displayed the contradictions of his character in picturesque chiaroscuro. What he could was the limit set on what

he would. Therefore, considering the infinite varieties of human temperaments, it was not merely possible, but natural, for Pietro Perugino and Gianpaolo Baglioni to be inhabitants at the same time of the selfsame city, and for the pious Atalanta to mourn the bloodshed and the treason of her Achillean son, the young and terrible Grifone. Here, in a word, in Perugia, beneath the fierce blaze of the Renaissance, were brought into splendid contrast both the martial violence and the religious sentiment of mediævalism, raised for a moment to the elevation of fine art.

Some of Perugino's qualities can be studied better in Perugia than elsewhere. Of his purely religious pictures—altar-pieces of Madonna and Saints, martyrdoms of S. Sebastian, Crucifixions, Ascensions, Annunciations, and Depositions from the Cross,—fine specimens are exhibited in nearly all the galleries of Europe. A large number of his works and of those of his scholars may be seen assembled in the Pinacoteca of Perugia. Yet the student of his pietistic stylé finds little here of novelty to notice. It is in the Sala del Cambio that we gain a really new conception of his faculty. Upon the decoration of that little hall he concentrated all his powers of invention. The frescoes of the Transfiguration and the Nativity, which face the great door, are the triumphs of his devotional manner. On other panels of the chamber he has portrayed the philosophers of Greece and Rome, the kings and generals of antiquity, the prophets and the sibyls who announced Christ's advent. The roof is covered with arabesques of delicate design and dainty execution—labyrinths of fanciful improvisation, in which flowers and foliage and human forms are woven into a harmonious framework for the medallions of the seven planets. The woodwork with which the hall is lined below the frescoes, shows to what a point of perfection the art of intarsiatura had

been carried in his school. All these decorative masterpieces are the product of one ingenuous style. Uninfluenced by the Roman frescoes imitated by Raphael in his Loggie of the Vatican, they breathe the spirit of the earlier Renaissance, which created for itself free forms of grace and loveliness without a pattern, divining by its innate sense of beauty what the classic artists had achieved. Take for an example the medallion of the planet Jupiter. The king of gods and men, hoary-headed and mild-eyed, is seated in his chariot drawn by eagles: before him kneels Ganymede, a fair-haired, exquisite, slim page, with floating mantle and ribbands fluttering round his tight hose and jerkin. Such were the cup-bearers of Galeazzo Sforza and Gianpaolo Baglioni. Then compare this fresco with the Jupiter in mosaic upon the cupola of the Chigi chapel in S. Maria del Popolo at Rome. A new age of experience had passed over Raphael between his execution of Perugino's design in the one and his conception of the other. He had seen the marbles of the Vatican, and had heard of Plato in the interval: the simple graces of the earlier Renaissance were no longer enough for him; but he must realise the thought of classic myths in his new manner. In the same way we may compare this Transfiguration with Raphael's last picture, these sibyls with those of S. Maria della Pace, these sages with the School of Athens, these warriors with the Battle of Maxentius. What is characteristic of the full-grown Raphael is his universal comprehension, his royal faculty for representing past and present, near and distant, things the most diverse, by forms ideal and yet distinctive. Each phase of the world's history and of human activity receives from him appropriate and elevated expression. What is characteristic of the frescoes in the Sala del Cambio, and indeed of the whole manner of Perugino, is that all subjects, sacred or secular, allegorical or real, are

conceived in the same spirit of restrained and well-bred piety. There is no attempt at historical propriety or dramatic realism. Grave, ascetic, melancholy faces of saints are put on bodies of kings, generals, sages, sibyls, and deities alike. The same ribbands and studied draperies clothe and connect all. The same conventional attitudes of meditative gracefulness are repeated in each group. Yet, the whole effect, is somewhat feeble and insipid, is harmonious and thoughtful. We see that each part has proceeded from the same mind, in the same mood, and that the master's mind was no common one, the mood itself was noble. Good taste is everywhere apparent: the work throughout is a masterpiece of refined fancy.

To Perugino the representative imagination was of less importance than a certain delicate and adequately ideal mode of feeling and conceiving. The consequent charm of his style is that everything is thought out and rendered visible in one decorous key. The worst that can be said of it is that its suavity inclines to mawkishness, and that its quietism borders upon sleepiness. We find it difficult not to accuse him of affectation. At the same time we are forced to allow that what he did, and what he refrained from doing, was determined by a purpose. A fresco of the Adoration of the Shepherds, and a picture of S. Sebastian in the Pinacoteca, where the archer on the right hand is drawn in a natural attitude with force and truth, show well enough what Perugino could do when he chose.

The best way of explaining his conventionality, in which the supreme power of a master is always verging on the facile trick of a mannerist, is to suppose that the people of Perugia and the Umbrian highlands imposed on him this narrow mode of treatment. We may presume that he was always receiving orders for pictures to be executed in his well-known manner.

Celestial insipidity in art was the fashion in that Umbria which the Baglioni and the Popes laid waste from time to time with fire and sword.¹

Therefore the painter who had made his reputation by placing devout young faces upon twisted necks, with a background of limpid twilight and calm landscape, was forced by the fervour of his patrons, and his own desire for money, to perpetuate pious prettinesses long after he had ceased to feel them. It is just this widespread popularity of a master unrivalled in one line of devotional sentimentalism which makes the contrast between Perugino and the Baglioni family so striking.

The Baglioni first came into notice during the wars they carried on with the Oddi of Perugia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.² This was one of those duels to the death, like that of the Visconti with the Torrensi of Milan, on which the fate of so many Italian cities in the middle ages hung. The nobles fought; the townsfolk assisted like a Greek chorus, sharing the passions of the actors, but contributing little to the

¹ It will not be forgotten by students of Italian history that Umbria was the cradle of the *Battuti* or Flagellants, who overspread Italy in the fourteenth century, and to whose devotion were due the *Laude*, or popular hymns of the religious confraternities, which in course of time produced the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* of fifteenth-century Florentine literature. Umbria, and especially Perugia and Assisi, seems to have been inventive in piety between 1200 and 1400.

² The Baglioni persecuted their rivals with persistent fury to the very last. Matarazzo tells how Morgante Baglioni gave a death-wound to his nephew, the young Carlo de li Oddi, in 1501: 'Dielli una ferita nella formosa faccia: el quale era in aspetto vago e bello giovane d'anni 23 o 24, al quale useivano e bionde tresse sotto la bella armadura.' The same night his kinsman Pompeo was murdered in prison with this last lament upon his lips: 'O infelice casa degli Oddi, quale avete tanta fama di conduttori, capitane, cavaliere, speron d'oro, protonotarie, e abbate; et in uno solo tempo avete homine quarantadue; e oggie, per me quale son ultimo, se asconde el nome de la magnifica e famosa casa degli Oddi, che mai al mondo non sarà piu nominata' (p. 175).

catastrophe. The piazza was the theatre on which the tragedy was played. In this contest the Baglioni proved the stronger, and began to sway the state of Perugia after the irregular fashion of Italian despots. They had no legal right over the city, no hereditary magistracy, no title of princely authority.¹ The Church was reckoned the supreme administrator of the Perugian commonwealth. But in reality no man could set foot on the Umbrian plain without permission from the Baglioni. They elected the officers of state. The lives and goods of the citizens were at their discretion. When a Papal legate showed his face, they made the town too hot to hold him. One of Innocent VIII.'s nephews had been murdered by them.² Another cardinal had shut himself up in a box, and sneaked on mule-back like a bale of merchandise through the gates to escape their fury. It was in vain that from time to time the people rose against them, massacring Pandolfo Baglioni on the public square in 1398, and joining with Ridolfo and Braccio of the dominant house to assassinate another Pandolfo with his son Niccolo in 1460. The more they were cut down, the more they flourished. The wealth they derived from their lordships in the duchy of Spoleto and the Umbrian hill-cities, and the treasures they accumulated in the service of the Italian republics, made them omnipotent in their native town. There they built tall houses on the site which Paul III. chose afterwards for his *castello*, and which is now an open place above the Porta San Carlo. From the

¹ The Baglioni were lords of Spello, Bettona, Montalera, and other Umbrian burghs, but never of Perugia. Perugia had a civic constitution similar to that of Florence and other Guelf towns under the protection of the Holy See. The power of the eminent house was based only on wealth and prestige.

² See Matarazzo, p. 38. It is here that he relates the covert threat addressed by Guido Baglioni to Alexander VI., who was seeking to inveigle him into his clutches.

balconies and turrets of these palaces, swarming with their *bravi*, they surveyed the splendid land that felt their force—a land which, even in midsummer, from sunrise to sunset keeps the light of day upon its up-turned face. And from this eyrie they issued forth to prey upon the plain, or to take their lust of love or blood within the city streets. The Baglioni spent but short time in the amusements of peace. From father to son they were warriors, and we have records of few Italian houses, except perhaps the Malatesti of Rimini, who equalled them in hardihood and fierceness. Especially were they noted for the remorseless *vendette* which they carried on among themselves, cousin tracking cousin to death with the ferocity and craft of sleuthhounds. Had they restrained these fratricidal passions, they might, perhaps, by following some common policy, like that of the Medici in Florence or the Bentivogli in Bologna, have successfully resisted the Papal authority and secured dynastic sovereignty.

It is not until 1495 that the history of the Baglioni becomes dramatic, possibly because till then they lacked the pen of Matarazzo.¹ But from this year forward to their final extinction, every detail of their doings has a picturesque and awful interest. Domestic furies, like the revel described by Cassandra above the palace of Mycenæ, seem to take possession of the fated house; and the doom which has fallen on them is worked out with pitiless exactitude to the last generation. In 1495 the heads of the Casa Baglioni were two brothers, Guido and Ridolfo, who had a numerous progeny of heroic sons. From Guido sprang Astorre, Adriano, called for his

¹ His chronicle is a masterpiece of naïve, unstudied narrative. Few documents are so important for the student of the sixteenth century in Italy. Whether it be really the work of Matarazzo or Maturanzio, the distinguished humanist, is more than doubtful. The writer seems to me as yet unspoiled by classic studies and the pedantries of imitation.

great strength Morgante,¹ Gismondo, Marcantonio, and Gentile. Ridolfo owned Troilo, Gianpaolo, and Simonetto. The first glimpse we get of these young athletes in Matarazzo's chronicle is on the occasion of a sudden assault upon Perugia, made by the Oddi and the exiles of their faction in September 1495. The foes of the Baglioni entered the gates, and began breaking the iron chains, *serragli*, which barred the streets against advancing cavalry. None of the noble house were on the alert except young Simonetto, a lad of eighteen, fierce and cruel, who had not yet begun to shave his chin.² In spite of all dissuasion, he rushed forth alone, bareheaded, in his shirt, with a sword in his right hand and a buckler on his arm, and fought against a squadron. There at the barrier of the piazza he kept his foes at bay, smiting men-at-arms to the ground with the sweep of his tremendous sword, and receiving on his gentle body twenty-two cruel wounds. While thus at fearful odds, the noble Astorre mounted his charger and joined him. Upon his helmet flashed the falcon of the Baglioni with the dragon's tail that swept behind. Bidding Simonetto tend his wounds, he in his turn held the square.

Listen to Matarazzo's description of the scene ; it is as good as any piece of the 'Mort Arthur : '—' According to the report of one who told me what he had seen with his own eyes, never did anvil take so many blows as he upon his person and his steed ; and they all kept striking at his lordship in

¹ This name, it may be incidentally mentioned, proves the widespread popularity of Pulci's poem, the *Morgante Maggiore*.

² 'Era costui al presente di anni 18 o 19 ; ancora non se radeva barba ; e mostrava tanta forza e tanto ardire, e era tanto adatto nel fatto d' arme, che era gran maraveglia ; e iotrava cum tanta gentilezza e gagliardia, che homo del mondo non l' aria mai creso ; et aria dato con la punta de la lancia in nel fondo d' uno bicchiere da la mattina a la sera,' &c. (p. 50).

such crowds that the one prevented the other. And so many lances, partisans, and crossbow quarries, and other weapons, made upon his body a most mighty din, that above every other noise and shout was heard the thud of those great strokes. But he, like one who had the mastery of war, set his charger where the press was thickest, jostling now one, and now another ; so that he ever kept at least ten men of his foes stretched on the ground beneath his horse's hoofs ; which horse was a most fierce beast, and gave his enemies what trouble he best could. And now that gentle lord was all fordone with sweat and toil, he and his charger ; and so weary were they that scarcely could they any longer breathe.'

Soon after, the Baglioni mustered in force. One by one their heroes rushed from the palaces. The enemy were driven back with slaughter ; and a war ensued, which made the fair land between Assisi and Perugia a wilderness for many months. It must not be forgotten that, at the time of these great feats of Simonetto and Astorre, young Raphael was painting in the studio of Perugino. What the whole city witnessed with astonishment and admiration, he, the keenly sensitive artist-boy, treasured in his memory. Therefore in the S. George of the Louvre, and in the mounted horseman trampling upon Heliodorus in the Stanze of the Vatican, victorious Astorre lives for ever, immortalised in all his splendour by the painter's art. The grinning griffin on the helmet, the resistless frown upon the forehead of the beardless knight, the terrible right arm, and the ferocious steed,—all are there as Raphael saw and wrote them on his brain. One characteristic of the Baglioni, as might be plentifully illustrated from their annalist, was their eminent beauty, which inspired beholders with an enthusiasm and a love they were far from deserving by their virtues. It is this, in combination with their personal heroism, which gives a peculiarly

dramatic interest to their doings, and makes the chronicle of Matarazzo more fascinating than a novel. He seems unable to write about them without using the language of an adoring lover.

In the affair of 1495 the Baglioni were at amity among themselves. When they next appear upon the scene, they are engaged in deadly feud. Cousin has set his hand to the throat of cousin, and the two heroes of the piazza are destined to be slain by foulest treachery of their own kin. It must be premised that besides the sons of Guido and Ridolfo already named, the great house counted among its most distinguished members a young Grifone, or Grifonetto, the son of Grifone and Atalanta Baglioni. Both his father and grandfather had died violent deaths in the prime of their youth; Galeotto, the father of Atalanta, by poison, and Grifone by the knife at Ponte Ricciolo in 1477. Atalanta was left a young widow with one only son, this Grifonetto, whom Matarazzo calls 'un altro Ganimede,' and who combined the wealth of two chief branches of the Baglioni. In 1500, when the events about to be related took place, he was quite a youth. Brave, rich, handsome, and married to a young wife, Zenobia Sforza, he was the admiration of Perugia. He and his wife loved each other dearly; and how, indeed, could it be otherwise, since 'l' uno e l' altro sembravano doi angeli di Paradiso?' At the same time he had fallen into the hands of bad and desperate counsellors. A bastard of the house, Filippo da Braccio, his half-uncle, was always at his side, instructing him not only in the accomplishments of chivalry, but also in wild ways that brought his name into disrepute. Another of his familiars was Carlo Barciglia Baglioni, an unquiet spirit, who longed for more power than his poverty and comparative obscurity allowed. With them associated Jeronimo della Penna, a veritable ruffian, contaminated from his earliest

youth with every form of lust and violence, and capable of any crime.¹ These three companions, instigated partly by the Lord of Camerino and partly by their own cupidity, conceived a scheme for massacring the families of Guido and Ridolfo at one blow. As a consequence of this wholesale murder, Perugia would be at their discretion. Seeing of what use Grifonetto by his wealth and name might be to them, they did all they could to persuade him to join their conjuration. It would appear that the bait first offered him was the sovereignty of the city, but that he was at last gained over by being made to believe that his wife Zenobia had carried on an intrigue with Gianpaolo Baglioni. The dissolute morals of the family gave plausibility to an infernal trick which worked upon the jealousy of Grifonetto. Thirsting for revenge, he consented to the scheme. The conspirators were further fortified by the accession of Jeronimo della Staffa, and three members of the House of Corgna. It is noticeable that out of the whole number only two, Bernardo da Corgna and Filippo da Braccio, were above the age of thirty. Of the rest, few had reached twenty-five. At so early an age were the men of those times adepts in violence and treason. The execution of the plot was fixed for the wedding festivities of Astorre Baglioni with Lavinia, the daughter of Giovanni Colonna and Giustina Orsini. At that time the whole Baglioni family were to be assembled in Perugia, with the single exception of Marcantonio, who was taking baths at Naples for his health. It was known that the members of the noble house, nearly all of them condottieri by trade, and eminent for their great strength

¹ Matarazzo's description of the ruffians who surrounded Grifonetto (pp. 104, 105, 113) would suit Webster's Flamineo or Bosola. In one place he likens Filippo to Achitophel and Grifonetto to Absalom. Villano Villani, quoted by Fabretti (vol. iii. p. 125), relates the street adventures of this clique. It is a curious picture of the pranks of an Italian princeling in the fifteenth century.

and skill in arms, took few precautions for their safety. They occupied several houses close together between the Porta San Carlo and the Porta Eburnea, set no regular guard over their sleeping chambers, and trusted to their personal bravery, and to the fidelity of their attendants.¹ It was thought that they might be assassinated in their beds. The wedding festivities began upon the 28th of July, and great is the particularity with which Matarazzo describes the doings of each successive day—processions, jousts, triumphal arches, banquets, balls, and pageants. The night of the 14th of August was finally set apart for the consummation of *el gran tradimento*: it is thus that Matarazzo always alludes to the crime of Grifonetto with a solemnity of reiteration that is most impressive. A heavy stone let fall into the courtyard of Guido Baglioni's palace was to be the signal: each conspirator was then to run to the sleeping chamber of his appointed prey. Two of the principals and fifteen bravi were told off to each victim: rams and crowbars were prepared to force the doors, if needful. All happened as had been anticipated. The crash of the falling stone was heard. The conspirators rushed to the scene of operations. Astorre, who was sleeping in the house of his traitorous cousin Grifonetto, was slain in the arms of his young bride, crying, as he vainly struggled, 'Misero Astorre che more come poltrone!' Simonetto, who lay that night with a lad called Paolo he greatly loved, flew to arms, exclaiming to his brother, 'Non dubitare Gismondo, mio fratello!' He too was soon despatched, together with his bedfellow. Filippo da Braccio, after killing him, tore from a great wound in his side the still quivering heart, into which

¹ Jacobo Antiquari, the secretary of Lodovico Sforza, in a curious letter, which gives an account of the massacre, says that he had often reproved the Baglioni for 'sleeping in their beds without any guard or watch, so that they might easily be overcome by enemies.'

he drove his teeth with savage fury. Old Guido died groaning, 'Ora è gionto il ponto mio;' and Gismondo's throat was cut while he lay holding back his face that he might be spared the sight of his own massacre. The corpses of Astorre and Simonetto were stripped and thrown out naked into the streets. Men gathered round and marvelled to see such heroic forms, with faces so proud and fierce even in death. In especial the foreign students likened them to ancient Romans.¹ But on their fingers were rings, and these the ruffians of the place would fain have hacked off with their knives. From this indignity the noble limbs were spared; then the dead Baglioni were hurriedly consigned to an unhonoured tomb. Meanwhile the rest of the intended victims managed to escape. Gianpaolo, assailed by Grifonetto and Gianfrancesco della Corgna, took refuge with his squire and bedfellow, Maraglia, upon a staircase leading from his room. While the squire held the passage with his pike against the foe, Gianpaolo effected his flight over neighbouring house-roofs. He crept into the attic of some foreign students, who, trembling with terror, gave him food and shelter, clad him in a scholar's gown, and helped him to fly in this disguise from the gates at dawn. He then joined his brother Troilo at Marsciano, whence he returned without delay to punish the traitors. At the same time Grifonetto's mother, Atalanta, taking with her his wife Zenobia and the two young sons of Gianpaolo, Malatesta and Orazio, afterwards so celebrated in Italian history for their great feats of arms and their crimes, fled to her country-house at Landona. Grifonetto in vain

¹ 'Quelli che li vidino, e maxime li forastiere studiante assimigliavano el magnifico Messer Astorre così morto ad un antico Romano, perchè prima era unanissimo; tanto sua figura era degna e magna,' &c. This is a touch exquisitely illustrative of the Renaissance enthusiasm for classic culture.

sought to see her there. She drove him from her presence with curses for the treason and the fratricide that he had planned. It is very characteristic of these wild natures, framed of fierce instincts and discordant passions, that his mother's curse weighed like lead upon the unfortunate young man. Next day, when Gianpaolo returned to try the luck of arms, Grifonetto, deserted by the companions of his crime and paralysed by the sense of his guilt, went out alone to meet him on the public place. The semi-failure of their scheme had terrified the conspirators: the horrors of that night of blood unnerved them. All had fled except the next victim of the feud. Putting his sword to the youth's throat, Gianpaolo looked into his eyes and said, 'Art thou here, Grifonetto? Go with God's peace: I will not slay thee, nor plunge my hand in my own blood, as thou hast done in thine.' Then he turned and left the lad to be hacked in pieces by his guard. The untranslatable words which Matarazzo uses to describe his death are touching from the strong impression they convey of Grifonetto's goodness: 'Qui ebbe sua signoria sopra sua nobile persona tante ferite che suoi membra leggiadre stese in terra.'¹ None but Greeks felt the charm of personal beauty thus. But while Grifonetto was breathing out his life upon the pavement of the piazza, his mother Atalanta and his wife Zenobia came to greet him through the awe-struck city. As they approached, all men fell aside and slunk away before their grief. None would seem to have had a share in Grifonetto's murder. Then Atalanta knelt by her dying son, and ceased from wailing, and prayed and exhorted him to pardon those who had caused his death. It appears that Grifonetto was too weak to speak, but that he made a signal of assent, and received his mother's blessing at the last:

¹ Here his lordship received upon his noble person so many wounds at he stretched his graceful limbs upon the earth.

'E allora porse el nobil giovenetto la dextra mano a la sua giovenile matre strengendo de sua matre la bianca mano; e poi incontinente spirò l'anima dal formoso corpo, e passò cum infinite benedizioni de sua matre in cambio de la maledictione che prima li aveva date.'¹ Here again the style of Matarazzo, tender and full of tears, conveys the keenest sense of the pathos of beauty and of youth in death and sorrow. He has forgotten *el gran tradimento*. He only remembers how comely Grifonetto was, how noble, how frank and spirited, how strong in war, how sprightly in his pleasures and his loves. And he sees the still young mother, delicate and nobly born, leaning over the athletic body of her bleeding son. This scene, which is perhaps a genuine instance of what we may call the neo-Hellenism of the Renaissance, finds its parallel in the 'Phœnissæ' of Euripides. Jocasta and Antigone have gone forth to the battlefield and found the brothers Polynices and Eteocles drenched in blood:—

From his chest
Heaving a heavy breath, King Eteocles heard
His mother, and stretched forth a cold damp hand
On hers, and nothing said, but with his eyes
Spake to her by his tears, showing kind thoughts
In symbols.

It was Atalanta, we may remember, who commissioned Raphael to paint the so-called Borghese Entombment. Did she perhaps feel, as she withdrew from the piazza, soaking with young Grifonetto's blood,² that she too had some portion in the sorrow of that mother who had wept for Christ? The

¹ 'And then the noble stripling stretched his right hand to his youthful mother, pressing the white hand of his mother; and afterwards forth-with he breathed his soul forth from his beauteous body, and died with numberless blessings of his mother instead of the curses she had given him before.'

² See Matarazzo, p. 134, for this detail.

memory of the dreadful morning must have remained with her through life, and long communion with our Lady of Sorrows may have sanctified the grief that had so bitter and so shameful a root of sin.

After the death of Grifonetto, and the flight of the conspirators, Gianpaolo took possession of Perugia. All who were suspected of complicity in the treason were massacred upon the piazza and in the Cathedral. At the expense of more than a hundred murders, the chief of the Baglioni found himself master of the city on the 17th of July. First he caused the Cathedral to be washed with wine and reconsecrated. Then he decorated the Palazzo with the heads of the traitors and with their portraits in fresco, painted hanging head downwards, as was the fashion in Italy.¹ Next he established himself in what remained of the palaces of his kindred, hanging the saloons with black, and arraying his retainers in the deepest mourning. Sad indeed was now the aspect of Perugia. Helpless and comparatively uninterested, the citizens had been spectators of these bloody broils. They were now bound to share the desolation of their masters. Matarazzo's description of the mournful palace and the silent town, and of the return of Marcantonio from Naples, presents a picture striking for its vividness.² In the true style of the Baglioni, Marcantonio sought to vent his sorrow not so much in tears as by new violence. He prepared and lighted torches, meaning to burn the whole quarter of Sant' Angelo; and from this design he was with difficulty dissuaded by his

¹ See Varchi (ed. Lemonnier, 1857), vol. ii. p. 265, vol. iii. pp. 224, 652, and Corio (Venice, 1554), p. 326, for instances of *dipinti per traditori*.

² P. 142. 'Pareva ogni cosa oscura e lacrimosa: tutte loro servitore piangevano; et le camere de lo resto de li magnifici Baglioni, e sale, e ognie cosa erano tutte intorno cum pagnie negre. E per la città non era più alcuno che sonasse nè cantasse; e poco si rideva,' &c.

brother. To such mad freaks of rage and passion were the inhabitants of a mediæval town in Italy exposed! They make us understand the *ordinanze di giustizia*, by which to be a noble was a crime in Florence.

From this time forward the whole history of the Baglioni family is one of crime and bloodshed. A curse had fallen on the house, and to the last of its members the penalty was paid. Gianpaolo himself acquired the highest reputation throughout Italy for his courage and sagacity both as a general and a governor.¹ It was he who held Julius II. at his discretion in 1506, and was sneered at by Machiavelli for not consummating his enormities by killing the warlike Pope.² He again, after joining the diet of La Magione against Cesare Borgia, escaped by his acumen the massacre of Sinigaglia, which overthrew the other conspirators. But his name was no less famous for unbridled lust and deeds of violence. He boasted that his son Constantino was a true Baglioni, since he was his sister's child. He once told Machiavelli that he had it in his mind to murder four citizens of Perugia, his enemies. He looked calmly on while his kinsmen Eusebio and Taddeo Baglioni, who had been accused of treason, were hewn to pieces by his guard. His wife, Ippolita de' Conti, was poignarded in her Roman farm; on hearing the news, he ordered a festival in which he was engaged to proceed with redoubled merriment.³ At last the time came for him to die

¹ See Froliieri, p. 437, for a very curious account of his character.

² Fabretti (vol. iii. pp. 193-202, and notes) discusses this circumstance in detail. Machiavelli's critique runs thus (*Discorsi*, lib. i. cap. 27): 'Nè si poteva credere che si fosse astenuto o per bontà, o per coscienza che lo ritenesse; perchè in un petto d' un uomo facinoroso, che si teneva la sorella, ch' aveva morti i cugini e i nipoti per regnare, non poteva scendere alcuno pietoso rispetto: ma si conchiuse che gli uomini non sanno essere onorevolmente tristi, o perfettamente buoni,' &c.

³ See Fabretti, vol. iii. p. 230. He is an authority for the details of

by fraud and violence. Leo X., anxious to remove so powerful a rival from Perugia, lured him in 1520 to Rome under the false protection of a papal safe-conduct. After a short imprisonment he had him beheaded in the Castle of S. Angelo. It was thought that Gentile, his first cousin, sometime Bishop of Orvieto, but afterwards the father of two sons in wedlock with Giulia Vitelli—such was the discipline of the Church at this epoch—had contributed to the capture of Gianpaolo, and had exulted in his execution.¹ If so, he paid dear for his treachery; for Orazio Baglioni, the second son of Gianpaolo and captain of the Church under Clement VII., had him murdered in 1527, together with his two nephews Fileno and Annibale.² This Orazio was one of the most bloodthirsty of the whole brood. Not satisfied with the assassination of Gentile, he stabbed Galeotto, the son of Grifonetto, with his own hand in the same year.³ Afterwards he died in the kingdom of Naples while leading the Black Bands in the disastrous war which followed the sack of Rome. He left no son. Malatesta, his elder brother, became one of the most celebrated generals of the age, holding the batons of the Venetian and Florentine republics, and managing to maintain his ascendancy in Perugia in spite of the persistent opposition of successive popes. But his name is best known in history for one of the greatest public crimes—a crime which must be ranked with that of Marshal Bazaine. Intrusted with the defence of Florence during the siege of 1530, he sold the city to his enemy, Pope Clement, receiving for the price of this infamy certain privileges and immunities which fortified his hold upon Perugia for a season. All Italy was ringing

Gianpaolo's life. The circumstance alluded to above justifies the terrible opening scene in Shelley's tragedy, *The Cenci*.

¹ Fabretti, vol. iii. p. 230, vol. iv. p. 10.

² See Varchi, *Storie Florentine*, vol. i. p. 224.

³ Ibid.

with the great deeds of the Florentines, who for the sake of their liberty transformed themselves from merchants into soldiers, and withstood the united powers of Pope and Emperor alone. Meanwhile Malatesta, whose trade was war, and who was being largely paid for his services by the beleaguered city, contrived by means of diplomatic procrastination, secret communication with the enemy, and all the arts that could intimidate an army of recruits, to push affairs to a point at which Florence was forced to capitulate without inflicting the last desperate glorious blow she longed to deal her enemies. The universal voice of Italy condemned him. When Matteo Dandolo, the Doge of Venice, heard what he had done, he cried before the Pregadi in conclave, 'He has sold that people and that city, and the blood of those poor citizens ounce by ounce, and has donned the cap of the biggest traitor in the world.'¹ Consumed with shame, corroded by an infamous disease, and mistrustful of Clement, to whom he had sold his honour, Malatesta retired to Perugia, and died in 1531. He left one son, Ridolfo, who was unable to maintain himself in the lordship of his native city. After killing the Papal legate, Cinzio Filonardi, in 1534, he was dislodged four years afterwards, when Paul III. took final possession of the place as an appanage of the Church, razed the houses of the Baglioni to the ground, and built upon their site the Rocca Paolina. This fortress bore an inscription: 'Ad coercendam Perusinorum audaciam.' The city was given over to the rapacity of the abominable Pier Luigi Farnese, and so bad was this tyranny of priests and bastards, that, strange to say, the Perugians regretted the troublous times of the Baglioni. Malatesta in dying had exclaimed, 'Help me, if you can; since after me you will be set to draw the cart like oxen.' Frolieri, relating the speech, adds,

¹ Fabretti, vol. iv. p. 206.

‘And this has been fulfilled to the last letter, for all have borne not only the yoke but the burden and the goad.’ Ridolfo Baglioni and his cousin Braccio, the eldest son of Grifonetto, were both captains of Florence. The one died in battle in 1554, the other in 1559. Thus ended the illustrious family. They are now represented by descendants from females, and by contadini who preserve their name and boast a pedigree of which they have no records.

The history of the Baglioni needs no commentary. They were not worse than other Italian nobles, who by their passions and their parties destroyed the peace of the city they infested. It is with an odd mixture of admiration and discontent that the chroniclers of Perugia allude to their ascendancy. Matarazzo, who certainly cannot be accused of hostility to the great house, describes the miseries of his country under their bad government in piteous terms:¹ ‘As I wish not to swerve from the pure truth, I say that from the day the Oddi were expelled, our city went from bad to worse. All the young men followed the trade of arms. Their lives were disorderly; and every day divers excesses were divulged, and the city had lost all reason and justice. Every man administered right unto himself, *propria auctoritate et manu regia*. Meanwhile the Pope sent many legates, if so be the city could be brought to order: but all who came returned in dread of being hewn in pieces; for they threatened to throw some from the windows of the palace, so that no cardinal or other legate durst approach Perugia, unless he were a friend of the Baglioni. And the city was brought to such misery, that the most wrongous men were most prized; and those who had slain two or three men walked as they listed through the palace, and went with sword or poignard to speak to the podestà and other magistrates. Moreover, every man of

¹ Pp. 102, 103.

worth was down-trodden by bravi whom the nobles favoured; nor could a citizen call his property his own. The nobles robbed first one and then another of goods and land. All offices were sold or else suppressed; and taxes and extortions were so grievous that every one cried out. And if a man were in prison for his head, he had no reason to fear death, provided he had some interest with a noble.' Yet the same Matarazzo in another place finds it in his heart to say: 'Though the city suffered great pains for these nobles, yet the illustrious house of Baglioni brought her honour throughout Italy, by reason of the great dignity and splendour of that house, and of their pomp and name. Wherefore through them our city was often set above the rest, and notably above the commonwealths of Florence and Siena.' Pride feels no pain. The gratified vanity of the Perugian burgher, proud to see his town preferred before its neighbours, blinds the annalist to all the violence and villany of the magnificent Casa Baglioni. So strong was the *esprit de ville* which through successive centuries and amid all vicissitudes of politics divided the Italians against themselves, and proved an insuperable obstacle to unity.

After reading the chronicle of Matarazzo at Perugia through one winter day, I left the inn and walked at sunset to the blood-bedabbled cathedral square; for still those steps and pavements to my strained imagination seemed reeking with the outpoured blood of Baglioni; and on the ragged stonework of San Lorenzo red patches slanted from the dying day. Then by one of those strange freaks of the brain to which we are all subject, for a moment I lost sight of untidy Gothic façades and gaunt unfinished church walls; and as I walked, I was in the Close of Salisbury on a perfumed summer afternoon. The drowsy scent of lime-flowers and mignonette,

the cawing of elm-cradled rooks, the hum of bees above, the velvet touch of smooth-shorn grass, and the breathless shadow of motionless green boughs made up one potent and absorbing mood of the charmed senses. Far overhead soared the calm grey spire into the infinite air, and the perfection of accomplished beauty slept beneath in those long lines of nave and choir and transepts. It was but a momentary dream, a thought that burned itself upon a fancy overtaxed by passionate images. Once more the puppet-scene of the brain was shifted; once more I saw the bleak bare flags of the Perugian piazza, the forlorn front of the Duomo, the bronze griffin, and Pisano's fountain, with here and there a flake of that tumultuous fire which the Italian sunset sheds. Who shall adequately compare the two pictures? Which shall we prefer—the Close of Salisbury, with its sleepy bells and cushioned ease of immemorial Deans—or this poor threadbare passion of Perugia, where every stone is stained with blood, and where genius in painters and scholars and prophets and ecstatic lovers has throbbled itself away to nothingness? It would be foolish to seek an answer to this question, idle to institute a comparison, for instance, between those tall young men with their broad winter cloaks who remind me of Grifonetto, and the vergers pottering in search of shillings along the gravel paths of Salisbury. It is more rational, perhaps, to reflect of what strange stuff our souls are made in this age of the world, when æsthetic pleasures, full, genuine, and satisfying, can be communicated alike by Perugia with its fascination of a dead irrevocable dramatic past, and Salisbury, which finds the artistic climax of its English comfort in the 'Angel in the House.' From Matarazzo, smitten with a Greek love for the beautiful Grifonetto, to Mr. Patmore, is a wide step.

ORVIETO

ON the road from Siena to Rome, halfway between Ficule and Viterbo, is the town of Orvieto. Travellers often pass it in the night-time. Few stop there, for the place is old and dirty, and its inns are said to be indifferent. But none who see it even from a distance can fail to be struck with its imposing aspect, as it rises from the level plain upon that mass of rock among the Apennines.

Orvieto is built upon the first of those huge volcanic blocks which are found like fossils embedded in the more recent geological formations of Central Italy, and which stretch in an irregular but unbroken line to the Campagna of Rome. Many of them, like that on which Civita Castellana is perched, are surrounded by rifts and chasms and ravines and fosses, strangely furrowed and twisted by the force of fiery convulsions. But their advanced guard, Orvieto, stands up definite and solid, an almost perfect cube, with walls precipitous to north and south and east, but slightly sloping to the westward. At its foot rolls the Paglia, one of those barren streams which swell in winter with the snows and rains of the Apennines, but which in summer-time shrink up, and leave bare beds of sand and pestilential canebrakes to stretch irregularly round their dwindled waters.

The weary flatness and utter desolation of this valley present a sinister contrast to the broad line of the Apennines, swelling tier on tier, from their oak-girdled basements set with villages and towers, up to the snow and cloud that crown

their topmost crags. The time to see this landscape is at sunrise; and the traveller should take his stand upon the rising ground over which the Roman road is carried from the town—the point, in fact, which Turner has selected for his vague and misty sketch of Orvieto in our Gallery. Thence he will command the whole space of the plain, the Apennines, and the river creeping in a straight line at the base; while the sun, rising to his right, will slant along the mountain flanks, and gild the leaden stream, and flood the castled crags of Orvieto with a haze of light. From the centre of this glory stand out in bold relief old bastions built upon the solid tufa, vast gaping gateways black in shadow, towers of churches shooting up above a medley of deep-corniced tall Italian houses, and, amid them all, the marble front of the Cathedral, calm and solemn in its unfamiliar Gothic state. Down to the valley from these heights there is a sudden fall; and we wonder how the few spare olive-trees that grow there can support existence on the steep slope of the cliff.

Our mind, in looking at this landscape, is carried by the force of old association to Jerusalem. We could fancy ourselves to be standing on Mount Olivet, with the valley of Jehoshaphat between us and the Sacred City. As we approach the town, the difficulty of scaling its crags seems insurmountable. The road, though carried skilfully along each easy slope or ledge of quarried rock, still winds so much that nearly an hour is spent in the ascent. Those who can walk should take a footpath, and enter Orvieto by the mediæval road, up which many a Pope, flying from rebellious subjects or foreign enemies, has hurried on his mule.¹

¹ Clement VII., for example, escaped from Rome disguised as a gardener after the sack in 1527, and, to quote the words of Varchi (*St. Flor.*, v. 17), 'Entrò agli otto di dicembre a due ore di notte in Orvieto, terra di sito fortissimo, per lo essere ella sopra uno scoglio pieno di tufi posta, d' ogni intorno scosceso e dirupato,' &c.

To unaccustomed eyes there is something forbidding and terrible about the dark and cindery appearance of volcanic tufa. Where it is broken, the hard and gritty edges leave little space for vegetation ; while at intervals the surface spreads so smooth and straight that one might take it for solid masonry erected by the architect of Pandemonium. Rubbish and shattered bits of earthenware and ashes, thrown from the city walls, cling to every ledge and encumber the broken pavement of the footway. Then as we rise, the castle battlements above appear more menacing, toppling upon the rough edge of the crag, and guarding each turn of the road with jealous loopholes or beetle-browed machicolations, until at last the gateway and portcullis are in view.

On first entering Orvieto, one's heart fails to find so terrible a desolation, so squalid a solitude, and so vast a difference between the present and the past, between the beauty of surrounding nature and the misery of this home of men. A long space of unoccupied ground intervenes between the walls and the hovels which skirt the modern town. This, in the times of its splendour, may have served for oliveyards, vineyards, and pasturage, in case of siege. There are still some faint traces of dead gardens left upon its arid wilderness, among the ruins of a castellated palace, decorated with the cross-keys and tiara of an unremembered pope. But now it lies a mere tract of scorched grass, insufferably hot and dry and sandy, intersected by dirty paths, and covered with the loathliest offal of a foul Italian town. Should you cross this ground at mid-day, under the blinding sun, when no living thing, except perhaps some poisonous reptile, is about, you would declare that Orvieto had been stricken for its sins by Heaven. Your mind would dwell mechanically on all that you have read of Papal crimes, of fratricidal wars, of Pagan abominations in the high places of the Church, of tempestuous passions and

refined iniquity—of everything, in fact, which renders Italy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance dark and ominous amid the splendours of her art and civilisation. This is the natural result ; this shrunken and squalid old age of poverty and self-abandonment is the end of that strong, prodigal, and vicious youth. Who shall restore vigour to these dead bones ? we cry. If Italy is to live again, she must quit her ruined palace towers to build fresh dwellings elsewhere. Filth, lust, rapacity, treason, godlessness, and violence have made their habitation here ; ghosts haunt these ruins ; these streets still smell of blood and echo to the cries of injured innocence ; life cannot be pure, or calm, or healthy, where this curse has settled.

Occupied with such reflections, we reach the streets of Orvieto. They are not very different from those of most Italian villages, except that there is little gaiety about them. Like Assisi or Siena, Orvieto is too large for its population, and merriment flows better from close crowding than from spacious accommodation. Very dark, and big, and dirty, and deserted, is the judgment we pronounce upon the houses ; very filthy and malodorous each passage ; very long this central street ; very few and sad and sullen the inhabitants ; and where, we wonder, is the promised inn ? In search of this one walks nearly through the city, until one enters the Piazza, where there is more liveliness. Here cafés may be found ; soldiers, strong and sturdy, from the north, lounge at the corners ; the shops present more show ; and a huge hotel, not bad for such a place, and appropriately dedicated to the *Belle Arti*, standing in a courtyard of its own, receives the traveller weary with his climb. As soon as he has taken rooms, his first desire is to go forth and visit the Cathedral.

The great *Duomo* was erected at the end of the thirteenth century to commemorate the Miracle of Bolsena. The value

of this miracle consisted in its establishing unmistakably the truth of transubstantiation. The story runs that a young Bohemian priest who doubted the dogma was performing the office of the mass in a church at Bolsena, when, at the moment of consecration, blood issued from five gashes in the wafer, which resembled the five wounds of Christ. The fact was evident to all the worshippers, who saw blood falling on the linen of the altar; and the young priest no longer doubted, but confessed the miracle, and journeyed straightway with the evidence thereof to Pope Urban IV. The Pope, who was then at Orvieto, came out with all his retinue to meet the convert and do honour to the magic-working relics. The circumstances of this miracle are well known to students of art through Raphael's celebrated fresco in the Stanze of the Vatican. And it will be remembered by the readers of ecclesiastical history that Urban had in 1264 promulgated by a bull the strict observance of the Corpus Christi festival in connection with his strong desire to re-establish the doctrine of Christ's presence in the elements. Nor was it without reason that, while seeking miraculous support for this dogma, he should have treated the affair of Bolsena so seriously as to celebrate it by the erection of one of the most splendid cathedrals in Italy; for the peace of the Church had recently been troubled by the reforming ardour of the Fraticelli and by the promulgation of Abbot Joachim's Eternal Gospel. This new evangelist had preached the doctrine of progression in religious faith, proclaiming a kingdom of the Spirit which should transcend the kingdom of the Son, even as the Christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish supremacy of the Father. Nor did he fail at the same time to attack the political and moral abuses of the Papacy, attributing its degradation to the want of vitality which pervaded the old Christian system, and calling on the clergy to lead more

simple and regenerate lives, consistently with the spiritual doctrine which he had received by inspiration. The theories of Joachim were immature and crude; but they were among the first signs of that liberal effort after self-emancipation which eventually stirred all Europe at the time of the Renaissance. It was, therefore, the obvious policy of the Popes to crush so dangerous an opposition while they could; and by establishing the dogma of transubstantiation, they were enabled to satisfy the craving mysticism of the people, while they placed upon a firmer basis the cardinal support of their own religious power.

In pursuance of his plan, Urban sent for Lorenzo Maitani, the great Sienese architect, who gave designs for a Gothic church in the same style as the Cathedral of Siena, though projected on a smaller scale. These two churches, in spite of numerous shortcomings manifest to an eye trained in French or English architecture, are still the most perfect specimens of Pointed Gothic produced by the Italian genius. The *Gottico Tedesco* had never been received with favour in Italy. Remains of Roman architecture, then far more numerous and perfect than they are at present, controlled the minds of artists, and induced them to adopt the rounded rather than the pointed arch. Indeed, there would seem to be something peculiarly Northern in the spirit of Gothic architecture: its intricacies suit the gloom of Northern skies, its massive exterior is adapted to the severity of Northern weather, its vast windows catch the fleeting sunlight of the North, and the pinnacles and spires which constitute its beauty are better expressed in rugged stone than in the marbles of the South. Northern cathedrals do not depend for their effect upon the advantages of sunlight or picturesque situations. Many of them are built upon broad plains, over which for more than half the year hangs fog. But the cathedrals of Italy owe

their charm to colour and brilliancy: their gilded sculpture and mosaics, the variegated marbles and shallow portals of their façades, the light ærial elegance of their campanili, are all adapted to the luminous atmosphere of a smiling land, where changing effects of natural beauty distract the attention from solidity of design and permanence of grandeur in the edifice itself.¹

The Cathedral of Orvieto will illustrate these remarks. Its design is very simple. It consists of a parallelogram, from which three chapels of equal size project, one at the east end, and one at the north and south. The windows are small and narrow, the columns round, and the roof displays none of that intricate groining we find in English churches. The beauty of the interior depends on surface decoration, on marble statues, woodwork, and fresco-paintings. Outside, there is the same simplicity of design, the same elaborated local ornament. The sides of the Cathedral are austere, their narrow windows cutting horizontal lines of black and white marble. But the façade is a triumph of decorative art. It is strictly what has often been described as a 'frontispiece;' for it bears no sincere relation to the construction of the building. The three gables

¹ In considering why Gothic architecture took so little root in mediæval Italy, we must remember that the Italians had maintained an unbroken connection with Pagan Rome, and that many of their finest churches were basilicas appropriated to Christian rites. Add to this that the commerce of their cities, which first acquired wealth in the twelfth century, especially Pisa and Venice, kept them in communication with the Levant, where they admired the masterpieces of Byzantine architecture, and whence they imported Greek artists in mosaic and stonework. Against these external circumstances, taken in connection with the hereditary leanings of an essentially Latin race, and with the natural conditions of landscape and climate alluded to above, the influence of a few imported German architects could not have had sufficient power to effect a thorough metamorphosis of the national taste. For further treatment of this subject see my 'Fine Arts,' *Renaissance in Italy*, Part III. chap. ii.

rise high above the aisles. The pinnacles and parapets and turrets are stuck on to look agreeable. It is a screen such as might be completed or left unfinished at will by the architect. Finished as it is, the façade of Orvieto presents a wilderness of beauties. Its pure white marble has been mellowed by time to a rich golden hue, in which are set mosaics shining like gems or pictures of enamel. A statue stands on every pinnacle; each pillar has a different design; round some of them are woven wreaths of vine and ivy; acanthus leaves curl over the capitals, making nests for singing birds or Cupids; the doorways are a labyrinth of intricate designs, in which the utmost elegance of form is made more beautiful by incrustations of precious agates and Alexandrine glasswork. On every square inch of this wonderful façade have been lavished invention, skill, and precious material. But its chief interest centres in the sculptures executed by Giovanni and Andrea, sons and pupils of Nicola Pisano. The names of these three men mark an era in the history of art. They first rescued Italian sculpture from the grotesqueness of the Lombard and the wooden monotony of the Byzantine styles. Sculpture takes the lead of all the arts. And Nicola Pisano, before Cimabue, before Duccio, even before Dante, opened the gates of beauty, which for a thousand years had been shut up and overgrown with weeds. As Dante invoked the influence of Virgil when he began to write his mediæval poem, and made a heathen bard his hierophant in Christian mysteries, just so did Nicola Pisano draw inspiration from a Græco-Roman sarcophagus. He studied the bas-relief of Phædra and Hippolytus, which may still be seen upon the tomb of Countess Beatrice in the Campo Santo, and so learned by heart the beauty of its lines and the dignity expressed in its figures, that in all his subsequent works we trace the elevated tranquillity of Greek sculpture. This imitation never degenerated into servile copying; nor, on the

other hand, did Nicola attain the perfect grace of an Athenian artist. He remained a truly mediæval carver, animated with a Christian instead of a Pagan spirit, but caring for the loveliness of form which art in the dark ages failed to realise.¹

Whether it was Nicola or his scholars who designed the basreliefs at Orvieto is of little consequence. Vasari ascribes them to the father; but we know that he completed his pulpit at Pisa in 1230, and his death is supposed to have taken place fifteen years before the foundation of the cathedral. At any rate, they are imbued with his genius, and bear the strongest affinity to his sculptures at Pisa, Siena, and Bologna. To estimate the influence they exercised over the arts of sculpture and painting in Italy would be a difficult task. Duccio and Giotto studied here; Ghiberti closely followed them. Signorelli and Raphael made drawings from their compositions. And the spirit which pervades these sculptures may be traced in all succeeding works of art. It is not classic; it is modern, though embodied in a form of beauty modelled on the Greek.

The basreliefs are carved on four marble tablets placed beside the porches of the church, and corresponding in size and shape with the chief doorways. They represent the course of Biblical history, beginning with the creation of the world, and ending with the last judgment. If it were possible here to compare them in detail with the similar designs of Ghiberti, Michel Angelo, and Raphael, it might be shown that the Pisani established modes of treating sacred subjects from which those mighty masters never deviated, though each stamped upon them his peculiar genius, making them more perfect as time added to the power of art. It would also be

¹ I am not inclined to reject the old legend mentioned above about Pisano's study of the antique. For a full discussion of the question see my 'Fine Arts,' *Renaissance in Italy*, Part III. chap. iiii.

not without interest to show that, in their primitive conceptions of the earliest events in history, the works of the Pisan artists closely resemble some sculptures executed on the walls of Northern cathedrals, as well as early mosaics in the South of Italy. We might have noticed how all the grotesque elements which appear in Nicola Pisano, and which may still be traced in Ghiberti, are entirely lost in Michel Angelo, how the supernatural is humanised, how the symbolical receives an actual expression, and how intellectual types are substituted for mere local and individual representations. For instance, the Pisani represent the Creator as a young man standing on the earth, with a benign and dignified expression, and attended by two ministering angels. He is the Christ of the Creed, 'by whom all things were made.' In Ghiberti we find an older man, sometimes appearing in a whirlwind of clouds and attendant spirits, sometimes walking on the earth, but still far different in conception from the Creative Father of Michel Angelo. The latter is rather the Platonic Demiurgus than the Mosaic God. By every line and feature of his face and flowing hair, by each movement of his limbs, whether he ride on clouds between the waters and the firmament, or stand alone creating by a glance and by a motion of his hand Eve, the full-formed and conscious woman, he is proclaimed the Maker who from all eternity has held the thought of the material universe within his mind. Raphael does not depart from this conception. The profound abstraction of Michel Angelo ruled his intellect, and received from his genius a form of perhaps greater grace. A similar growth from the germinal designs of the Pisani may be traced in many groups.

But we must not linger at the gate. Let us enter the cathedral and see some of the wonders it contains. Statues of gigantic size adorn the nave. Of these, the most beautiful

are the work of Ippolito Scalza, an artist whom Orvieto claims with pride as one of her own sons. The long line of saints and apostles whom they represent conduct us to the high altar, surrounded by its shadowy frescoes, and gleaming with the work of carvers in marble and bronze and precious metals. But our steps are drawn toward the chapel of the south transept, where now a golden light from the autumnal sunset falls across a crowd of worshippers. From far and near the poor people are gathered. Most of them are women. They kneel upon the pavement and the benches, sunburnt faces from the vineyards and the canebrakes of the valley. The old look prematurely aged and withered—their wrinkled cheeks bound up in scarlet and orange-coloured kerchiefs, their skinny fingers fumbling on the rosary, and their mute lips moving in prayer. The younger women have great listless eyes and large limbs used to labour. Some of them carry babies trussed up in tight swaddling-clothes. One kneels beside a dark-browed shepherd, on whose shoulder falls his shaggy hair; and little children play about, half hushed, half heedless of the place, among old men whose life has dwindled down into a ceaseless round of prayers. We wonder why this chapel, alone in the empty cathedral, is so crowded with worshippers. They surely are not turned towards that splendid Pietà of Scalza—a work in which the marble seems to live a cold, dead, shivering life. They do not heed Angelico's and Signorelli's frescoes on the roof and walls. The interchange of light and gloom upon the stalls and carved work of the canopies can scarcely rivet so intense a gaze. All eyes seem fixed upon a curtain of red silk above the altar. Votive pictures, and glass cases full of silver hearts, wax babies, hands and limbs of every kind, are hung round it. A bell rings. A jingling organ plays a little melody in triple time; and from the sacristy comes forth the priest. With

much reverence, and with a show of preparation, he and the acolytes around him mount the altar steps and pull a string which draws the curtain. Behind the silken veil we behold Madonna and her child—a faint, old, ugly picture, blackened with the smoke and incense of five hundred years, a wonder-working image, cased in gold, and guarded from the common air by glass and draperies. Jewelled crowns are stuck upon the heads of the mother and the infant. In the efficacy of Madonna di San Brizio to ward off agues, to deliver from the pangs of childbirth or the fury of the storm, to keep the lover's troth and make the husband faithful to his home, these pious women of the marshes and the mountains put a simple trust.

While the priest sings, and the people pray to the dance-music of the organ, let us take a quiet seat unseen, and picture to our minds how the chapel looked when Angelico and Signorelli stood before its plastered walls, and thought the thoughts with which they covered them. Four centuries have gone by since those walls were white and even to their brushes; and now you scarce can see the golden aureoles of saints, the vast wings of the angels, and the flowing robes of prophets through the gloom. Angelico came first, in monk's dress, kneeling before he climbed the scaffold to paint the angry judge, the Virgin crowned, the white-robed army of the Martyrs, and the glorious company of the Apostles. These he placed upon the roof, expectant of the Judgment. Then he passed away, and Luca Signorelli, the rich man who 'lived splendidly and loved to dress himself in noble clothes,' the liberal and courteous gentleman, took his place upon the scaffold. For all the worldliness of his attire and the worldliness of his living, his brain teemed with stern and terrible thoughts. He searched the secrets of sin and of the grave, of destruction and of resurrection, of heaven and hell. All these he has painted on the walls beneath the saints of Fra

Angelico. First come the troubles of the last days, the preaching of Antichrist, and the confusion of the wicked. In the next compartment we see the Resurrection from the tomb ; and side by side with that is painted Hell. Paradise occupies another portion of the chapel. On each side of the window, beneath the Christ of Fra Angelico, are delineated scenes from the Judgment. A wilderness of arabesques, enclosing medallion portraits of poets and chiaroscuro episodes selected from Dante and Ovid, occupies the lower portions of the chapel walls beneath the great subjects enumerated above ; and here Signorelli has given free vein to his fancy and his mastery over anatomical design, accumulating naked human figures in the most fantastic and audacious variety of pose.

Look at the 'Fulminati'—so the group of wicked men are called whose death precedes the Judgment. Huge naked angels, sailing upon vanlike wings, breathe columns of red flame upon a crowd of wicked men and women. In vain these sinners avoid the descending fire. It pursues and fells them to the earth. As they fly, their eyes are turned towards the dreadful faces in the air. Some hurry through a portico, huddled together, falling men, and women clasping to their arms dead babies scorched with flame. One old man stares straightforward, doggedly awaiting death. One woman scowls defiance as she dies. A youth has twisted both hands in his hair, and presses them against his ears to drown the screams and groans and roaring thunder. They trample upon prostrate forms already stiff. Every shape and attitude of sudden terror and despairing guilt are here. Next comes the Resurrection. Two angels of the Judgment—gigantic figures, with the plumeless wings that Signorelli loves—are seen upon the clouds. They blow trumpets with all their might, so that each naked muscle seems strained to make the blast, which bellows through the air and shakes

the sepulchres beneath the earth. Thence rise the dead. All are naked, and a few are seen like skeletons. With painful effort they struggle from the soil that clasps them round, as if obeying an irresistible command. Some have their heads alone above the ground. Others wrench their limbs from the clinging earth; and as each man rises, it closes under him. One would think that they were being born again from solid clay, and growing into form with labour. The fully risen spirits stand and walk about, all occupied with the expectation of the Judgment; but those that are yet in the act of rising, have no thought but for the strange and toilsome process of this second birth. Signorelli here, as elsewhere, proves himself one of the greatest painters by the simple means with which he produces the most marvellous effects. His composition sways our souls with all the passion of the terrible scenes that he depicts. Yet what does it contain? Two stern angels on the clouds, a blank grey plain, and a multitude of naked men and women. In the next compartment Hell is painted. This is a complicated picture, consisting of a mass of human beings entangled with torturing fiends. Above hover demons bearing damned spirits, and three angels see that justice takes its course. Signorelli here degenerates into no mediæval ugliness and mere barbarity of form. His fiends are not the bestial creatures of Pisano's basreliefs, but models of those monsters which Duppa has engraved from Michel Angelo's 'Last Judgment'—lean naked men, in whose hollow eyes glow the fires of hate and despair, whose nails have grown to claws, and from whose ears have started horns. They sail upon bats' wings; and only by their livid hue, which changes from yellow to the ghastliest green, and by the cruelty of their remorseless eyes, can you know them from the souls they torture. In Hell ugliness and power of mischief come with length of years.

Continual growth in crime distorts the form which once was human ; and the interchange of everlasting hatred degrades the tormentor and his victim to the same demoniac ferocity. To this design the science of foreshortening, and the profound knowledge of the human form in every posture, give its chief interest. Paradise is not less wonderful. Signorelli has contrived to throw variety and grace into the somewhat monotonous groups which this subject requires. Above are choirs of angels, not like Fra Angelico's, but tall male creatures clothed in voluminous drapery, with grave features and still, solemn eyes. Some are dancing, some are singing to the lute, and one, the most gracious of them all, bends down to aid a suppliant soul. The men beneath, who listen in a state of bliss, are all undraped. Signorelli, in this difficult composition, remains temperate, serene, and simple ; a Miltonic harmony pervades the movement of his angelic choirs. Their beauty is the product of their strength and virtue. No floral ornaments or cherubs, or soft clouds, are found in his Paradise ; yet it is fair and full of grace. Here Luca seems to have anticipated Raphael.

It may be parenthetically observed, that Signorelli has introduced himself and Niccolo Angeli, treasurer of the cathedral building fund, in the corner of the fresco representing Antichrist, with the date 1508. They stand as spectators and solemn witnesses of the tragedy, set forth in all its acts by the great master.

After viewing these frescoes, we muse and ask ourselves why Signorelli's fame is so inadequate to his deserts ? Partly, no doubt, because he painted in obscure Italian towns, and left few easel-pictures.¹ Besides, the artists of the sixteenth

¹ The Uffizzi and Pitti Galleries at Florence contain one or two fine specimens of Luca Signorelli's Holy Families, which show his influence over the early manner of Michel Angelo. Into the background of one

century eclipsed all their predecessors, and the name of Signorelli has been swallowed up in that of Michel Angelo. Vasari said that 'esso Michel Angelo imitò l'andar di Luca,

circular picture he has introduced a group of naked figures, which was imitated by Buonarroti in the Holy Family of the Tribune. The Accademia has also a picture of saints and angels illustrative of his large style and crowded composition. The Brera at Milan can boast of a very characteristic Flagellation, where the nude has been carefully studied, and the brutality of an insolent officer is forcibly represented. But perhaps the most interesting of his works out of Orvieto are those in his native place, Cortona. In the Church of the Gesù in that town there is an altar-piece representing Madonna in glory with saints, which also contains on a smaller scale than the principal figures a little design of the Temptation in Eden. You recognise the master's individuality in the muscular and energetic Adam. The Duomo has a Communion of the Apostles which shows Signorelli's independence of tradition. It is the Cenacolo treated with freedom. Christ stands in the midst of the twelve, who are gathered around him, some kneeling and some upright, upon a marble pavement. The whole scene is conceived in a truly grand style—noble attitudes, broad draperies, sombre and rich colouring, masculine massing of the figures in effective groups. The Christ is especially noble. Swaying a little to the right, he gives the bread to a kneeling apostle. The composition is marked by a dignity and self-restraint which Raphael might have envied. San Niccolo, again, has a fine picture by this master. It is a Deposition with saints and angels—those large-limbed and wide-winged messengers of God whom none but Signorelli realised. The composition of this picture is hazardous, and at first sight it is even displeasing. The figures seem roughly scattered in a vacant space. The dead Christ has but little dignity, and the passion of S. Jerome in the foreground is stiff in spite of its exaggeration. But long study only serves to render this strange picture more and more attractive. Especially noticeable is the youthful angel clad in dark green who sustains Christ. He is a young man in the bloom of strength and beauty, whose long golden hair falls on each side of a sublimely lovely face. Nothing in painting surpasses the modelling of the vigorous but delicate left arm stretched forward to support the heavy corpse. This figure is conceived and executed in a style worthy of the Orvietan frescoes. Signorelli, for whose imagination angels had a special charm, has shown here that his too frequent contempt for grace was not the result of insensibility to beauty. Strength is the parent of sweetness in this wonderful winged youth. But not a single sacrifice is made in the whole picture to mere elegance.—Cortona is a place which, independently

come può vedere ognuno.' Nor is it hard to see that what the one began at Orvieto the other completed in the Vatican. These great men had truly kindred spirits. Both struggled

of Signorelli, well deserves a visit. Like all Etruscan towns, it is perched on the top of a high hill, whence it commands a wonderful stretch of landscape—Monte Amiata and Montepulciano to the south, Chiusi with its lake, the lake of Thrasymentis, and the whole broad Tuscan plain. The city itself is built on a projecting buttress of the mountain, to which it clings so closely that, in climbing to the terrace of S. Margarita, you lose sight of all but a few towers and house-roofs. One can almost fancy that Signorelli gained his broad and austere style from the habitual contemplation of a view so severe in outline, and so vacant in its width. This landscape has none of the variety which distinguishes the prospect from Perugia, none of the suavity of Siena. It is truly sympathetic in its bare simplicity to the style of the great painter of Cortona. Try to see it on a winter morning, when the mists are lying white and low and thin upon the plain, when distant hills rise islanded into the air, and the outlines of lakes are just discernible through fleecy haze.—Next to Cortona in importance is the Convent of Monte Oliveto in the neighbourhood of Siena, where Signorelli painted eight frescoes from the story of S. Benedict, distinguished by his customary vigour of conception, masculine force of design, and martial splendour in athletic disdainful young men. One scene in this series, representing the interior of a country inn, is specially interesting for a realism not usual in the work of Signorelli. The frescoes painted for Petruccio at Siena, one of which is now in the National Gallery, the fresco in the Sistine Chapel, which has suffered sadly from retouching, and the magnificent classical picture called the 'School of Pan,' executed for Lorenzo de' Medici, and now at Berlin, must not be forgotten, nor yet the church-pictures scattered over Loreto, Arcevia, Città di Castello, Borgo San Sepolcro, Volterra, and other cities of the Tuscan-Umbrian district. Arezzo, it may be added in conclusion, has two altar-pieces of Signorelli's in its Pinacoteca, neither of which adds much to our conception of this painter's style. Noticeable as they may be among the works of that period, they prove that his genius was hampered by the narrow and traditional treatment imposed on him in pictures of this kind. Students may be referred to Robert Vischer's *Luca Signorelli* (Leipzig, 1879) for a complete list of the master's works and an exhaustive biography. I have tried to estimate his place in the history of Italian art in my volume on the 'Fine Arts,' *Renaissance in Italy*, Part III. I may also mention two able articles by Professor Colvin published a few years since in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

to express their intellectual conceptions in the simplest and most abstract forms. The works of both are distinguished by contempt for adventitious ornaments and for the grace of positive colour. Both chose to work in fresco, and selected subjects of the gravest and most elevated character. The study of anatomy, and the scientific drawing of the naked body, which Luca practised, were carried to perfection by Michel Angelo. Sublimity of thought and self-restraint pervade their compositions. He who would understand Buonarroti must first appreciate Signorelli. The latter, it is true, was confined to a narrower circle in his study of the beautiful and the sublime. He had not ascended to that pure idealism, superior to all the accidents of place and time, which is the chief distinction of Michel Angelo's work. At the same time, his manner had not suffered from too fervid an enthusiasm for the imperfectly comprehended antique. He painted the life he saw around him, and clothed his men and women in the dress of Italy.

Such reflections, and many more, pass through our mind as we sit and ponder in the chapel, which the daylight has deserted. The country people are still on their knees, still careless of the frescoed forms around them, still praying to Madonna of the Miracles. The service is well-nigh done. The benediction has been given, the organist strikes up his air of Verdi, and the congregation shuffles off, leaving the dimly lighted chapel for the vast sonorous dusky nave. How strange it is to hear that faint strain of a feeble opera sounding where, a short while since, the trumpet-blast of Signorelli's angels seemed to thrill our ears !

LUCRETIVS

IN seeking to distinguish the Roman from the Greek genius we can find no surer guide than Virgil's famous lines in the Sixth *Æneid*. Virgil lived to combine the traditions of both races in a work of profoundly meditated art, and to their points of divergence he was sensitive as none but a poet bent upon resolving them could be. The real greatness of the Romans consisted in their capacity for government, law, practical administration. What they willed, they carried into effect with an iron indifference to everything but the object in view. What they acquired, they held with the firm grasp of force, and by the might of organised authority. Their architecture, in so far as it was original, subserved purposes of public utility. Philosophy with them ceased to be speculative, and applied itself to the ethics of conduct. Their religious conceptions—in so far as these were not adopted together with general culture from the Greeks, or together with sensual mysticism from the East—were practical abstractions. The Latin ideal was to give form to the state by legislation, and to mould the citizen by moral discipline. The Greek ideal was contained in the poetry of Homer, the sculpture of Pheidias, the heroism of Harmodius, the philosophy of Socrates. Hellas was held together by no system, but by the Delphic oracle and the Olympian games. The Greeks depended upon culture, as the Romans upon law. The national character determined by culture, and that determined by discipline, eventually broke down: but the ruin in either case

was different. The Greek became servile, indolent, and slippery; the Roman became arrogant, bloodthirsty, tyrannous, and brutal. The Greeks in their best days attained to *σωφροσύνη*, their regulative virtue, by a kind of instinct; and even in their worst debasement they never exhibited the extravagance of lust and cruelty and pompous prodigality displayed by Rome. The Romans, deficient in the æsthetic instinct, whether applied to morals or to art, were temperate upon compulsion; and when the strain of law relaxed, they gave themselves unchecked to profligacy. The bad taste of the Romans made them aspire to the huge and monstrous. Nero's whim to cut through the isthmus, Caligula's villa built upon the sea at Baia, the acres covered by imperial palaces in Rome, are as Latin as the small scale of the Parthenon is Greek. Athens annihilates our notions of mere magnitude by the predominance of harmony and beauty, to which size is irrelevant. Rome dilates them to the full: it is the colossal greatness, the mechanical pride, of her monuments that win our admiration. By comparing the Dionysian theatre at Athens, during a representation of the 'Antigone,' with the Flavian amphitheatre at Rome, while the gladiators sang their *Ave Cæsar!* we gain at once a measure for the differences between Greek and Latin taste. In spiritual matters, again, Rome, as distinguished from Hellas, was omnivorous. The cosmopolitan receptivity of Roman sympathies, absorbing Egypt and the Orient wholesale, is as characteristic as the exclusiveness of the Greeks, their sensitive anxiety about the *ἥθος*. We feel that it was in a Roman rather than a Greek atmosphere, where no middle term of art existed like a neutral ground between the moral law and sin, where no delicate intellectual sensibilities interfered with the assimilation of new creeds, that Christianity was destined to strike root and flourish.

These remarks, familiar to students, form a proper prelude to

the criticism of Lucretius : for in Lucretius the Roman character found its most perfect literary incarnation. He is at all points a true Roman, gifted with the strength, the conquering temper, the uncompromising haughtiness, and the large scale of his race. Holding, as it were, the thought of Greece in fee, he administers the Epicurean philosophy as though it were a province, marshalling his arguments like legionaries, and spanning the chasms of speculative insecurity with the masonry of hypotheses. As the arches of the Pont du Gard, suspended in their power amid that solitude, produce an overmastering feeling of awe ; so the huge fabric of the Lucretian system, hung across the void of Nihilism, inspires a sense of terror, not so much on its own account as for the Roman sternness of the mind that made it. 'Le retentissement de mes pas dans ces immenses voûtes me faisait croire entendre la forte voix de ceux qui les avait bâties. Je me perdais comme un insecte dans cette immensité.' This is what Rousseau wrote about the aqueduct of Nismes. This is what we feel in pacing the corridors of the Lucretian poem. Sometimes it seems like walking through resounding caves of night and death, where unseen cataracts keep plunging down uncertain depths, and winds 'thwarted and forlorn' swell from an unknown distance, and rush by, and wail themselves to silence in the unexplored beyond. At another time the impression left upon the memory is different. We have been following a Roman road from the gate of the Eternal City, through field and vineyard, by lake and river-bed, across the broad intolerable plain and the barren tops of Alps, down into forests where wild beasts and barbarian tribes wander, along the marge of Rhine or Elbe, and over frozen fens, in one perpetual straight line, until the sea is reached and the road ends because it can go no further. All the while, the iron wheel-rims of our chariot have jarred upon imperishable paved work ; there has been no stop nor stay ;

the visions of things beautiful and strange and tedious have flown past; at the climax we look forth across a waste of waves and tumbling wilderness of surf and foam, where the storm sweeps and hurrying mists drive eastward close above our heads. The want of any respite, breathing-space, or intermission in the poem, helps to force this image of a Roman journey on our mind. From the first line to the last there is no turning-point, no pause of thought, scarcely a comma, and the whole breaks off:—

rixantes potius quam corpora desererentur :

as though a scythe-sweep from the arm of Death had cut the thread of singing short.

Is, then, this poem truly song? Indeed it is. The brazen voice of Rome becomes tunable; a majestic rhythm sustains the progress of the singer, who, like Milton's Satan,

O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.

It is only because, being so much a Roman, he insists on moving ever onward with unwavering march, that Lucretius is often wearisome and rough. He is too disdainful to care to mould the whole stuff of his poem to one quality. He is too truth-loving to condescend to rhetoric. The scoriæ, the grit, the dross, the quartz, the gold, the jewels of his thought are hurried onward in one mighty lava-flood, that has the force to bear them all with equal ease—not altogether unlike that hurling torrent of the world painted by Tintoretto in his picture of the Last Day, which carries on its breast cities and forests and men with all their works, to plunge them in a bottomless abyss.

Poems of the perfect Hellenic type may be compared to bronze statues, in the material of which many divers metals

have been fused. Silver and tin and copper and lead and gold are there : each substance adds a quality to the mass ; yet the whole is bronze. The furnace of the poet's will has so melted and mingled all these ores, that they have run together and filled the mould of his imagination. It is thus that Virgil chose to work. He made it his glory to realise artistic harmony, and to preserve a Greek balance in his style. Not so Lucretius. In him the Roman spirit, disdainful, uncompromising, and forceful, had full sway. We can fancy him accosting the Greek masters of the lyre upon Parnassus, deferring to none, conceding nought, and meeting their arguments with proud indifference :—

tu regere imperio populos Romane memento.

The Roman poet, swaying the people of his thoughts, will stoop to no persuasion, adopt no middle course. It is not his business to please, but to command ; he will not wait upon the *καρπός*, or court opportunity ; Greeks may surprise the Muses in relenting moods, and seek out ' *mollia tempora fandi* ; ' all times and seasons must serve him ; the terrible, the discordant, the sublime, and the magnificent shall drag his thundering car-wheels, as he lists, along the road of thought.

At the very outset of the poem we feel ourselves within the grasp of the Roman imagination. It is no Aphrodite, risen from the waves and white as the sea-foam, that he invokes :—

*Æneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,
alma Venus.*

This Venus is the mother of the brood of Rome, and at the same time an abstraction as wide as the universe. See her in the arms of Mavors :—

in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
 reicit æterno devictus vulnere amoris,
 atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
 pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus,
 eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.
 hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
 circumfusa super, suavis ex ore loquelas
 funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem.

In the whole Lucretian treatment of love there is nothing really Greek. We do not hear of Erôs, either as the mystic mania of Plato, or as the winged boy of Meleager. Love in Lucretius is something deeper, larger, and more elemental than the Greeks conceived; a fierce and overmastering force, a natural impulse which men share in common with the world of things.¹ Both the pleasures and the pains of love are conceived on a gigantic scale, and described with an irony that has the growl of a roused lion mingled with its laughter:—

ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo
 inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit.

The acts of love and the insanities of passion are viewed from no standpoint of sentiment or soft emotion, but always in relation to philosophical ideas, or as the manifestation of something terrible in human life. Yet they lose nothing thereby in the voluptuous impression left upon the fancy:—

sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis,
 nec satiare queunt spectando corpora coram
 nec manibus quicquam teneris abradere membris
 possunt errantes incerti corpore toto.

¹ A fragment preserved from the *Danaïdes* of Æschylus has the thought of Aphrodite as the mistress of love in earth and sky and sea and cloud; and this idea finds a philosophical expression in Empedocles. But the tone of these Greek poets is as different from that of Lucretius as a Greek Hera is from a Roman Juno.

denique cum membris conlatis flore fruuntur
 ætatis, iam cum præſagit gaudia corpus
 atque in eost Venus ut muliebria conserat arva,
 adfigunt auide corpus iunguntque salivas
 oris et inspirant pressantes dentibus ora,
 nequiquam, quoniam nil inde abradere possunt
 nec penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto.

The master-word in this passage is *nequiquam*. 'To desire the impossible,' says the Greek proverb, 'is a disease of the soul.' Lucretius, who treats of physical desire as a torment, asserts the impossibility of its perfect satisfaction. There is something almost tragic in these sighs and pantings and pleasure-throes, and incomplete fruitions of souls pent up within their frames of flesh. We seem to see a race of men and women such as have never lived, except perhaps in Rome or in the thought of Michel Angelo,¹ meeting in leonine embracements that yield pain, whereof the climax is, at best, relief from rage and respite for a moment from consuming fire. There is a life dæmonic rather than human in those mighty limbs; and the passion that bends them on the marriage bed has in it the stress of storms, the rampings and the roarings of leopards at play. Or, take again this single line:—

et Venus in silvis iungebat corpora amantum.

What a picture of primeval breadth and vastness! The *vice égrillard* of Voltaire, the coarse animalism of Rabelais, even the large comic sexuality of Aristophanes, are in another region: for the forest is the world, and the bodies of the lovers are things natural and unashamed, and Venus is the tyrannous instinct that controls the blood in spring. Only a Roman poet could have conceived of passion so mightily and

¹ See, for instance, his meeting of Ixion with the phantom of Juno, or his design for Leda and the Swan.

so impersonally, expanding its sensuality to suit the scale of Titanic existences, and purging from it both sentiment and spirituality as well as all that makes it mean.

In like manner, the Lucretian conception of Ennui is wholly Roman :—

Si possent homines, proinde ac sentire videntur
pondus inesse animo quod se gravitate fatiget,
e quibus id fiat causis quoque noscere et unde
tanta mali tamquam moles in pectore constet,
haut ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus
quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quærere semper
commutare locum quasi onus deponere possit.
exit sæpe foras magnis ex ædibus ille,
esse domi quem pertæsumst, subitoque revertit,
quippe foris nilo melius qui sentiat esse.
currit agens mannos ad villam præcipitanter,
auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans ;
oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villæ,
aut abit in somnum gravis atque oblivia quærit,
aut etiam properans urbem petit atque revisit.
hoc se quisque modo fugit (at quem scilicet, ut fit,
effugere haut potis est, ingratis hæret) et odit
propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet æger ;
quam bene si videat, iam rebus quisque relictis
naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum,
temporis æterni quoniam, non unius horæ,
ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
ætas, post mortem quæ restat cumque manenda.

Virgil would not have written these lines. A Greek poet could not have conceived them : unless we imagine to ourselves what Æschylus or Pindar, oppressed by long illness, and forgetful of the gods, might possibly have felt. In its sense of spiritual vacancy, when the world and all its uses have become flat, stale, unprofitable, and the sentient soul oscillates like a pendulum between weariful extremes, seeking repose in restless movement, and hurling the ruins of a life into the gulf of its exhausted cravings, we perceive already the symptoms of that unnamed

malady which was the plague of imperial Rome. The tyrants and the suicides of the Empire expand before our eyes a pageant of their lassitude, relieved in vain by festivals of blood and orgies of unutterable lust. It is not that *ennui* was a specially Roman disease. Under certain conditions it is sure to afflict all overtaxed civilisation; and for the modern world no one has expressed its nature better than the slight and feminine De Musset.¹ Indeed, the Latin language has no one phrase denoting *Ennui*;—*livor* and *fastidium*, and even *tædium vitæ*, meaning something more specific and less all-pervasive as a moral agency. This in itself is significant, since it shows the unconsciousness of the race at large, and renders the intuition of Lucretius all the more remarkable. But in Rome there were the conditions favourable to its development—imperfect culture, vehement passions unabsorbed by commerce or by political life, the habituation to extravagant excitement in war and in the circus, and the fermentation of an age foredestined to give birth to new religious creeds. When the infinite but ill-assured power of the Empire was conferred on semi-madmen, *Ennui* in Rome assumed colossal proportions. Its victims sought for palliatives in cruelty and crime elsewhere unknown, except perhaps in Oriental courts. Lucretius, in the last days of the Republic, had discovered its deep significance for human nature. To all the pictures of Tacitus it forms a solemn tragic background, enhancing, as it were, by spiritual gloom the carnival of passions which gleam so brilliantly upon his canvas. In the person of Caligula, *Ennui* sat supreme upon the throne of the terraqueous globe. The insane desires and the fantastic deeds of the autocrat who wished one head for humanity that he might cut it off, sufficiently reveal the extent to which his spirit had been gangrened by this ulcer. There

¹ See the prelude to *Les Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle* and *Les Nuits*.

is a simple paragraph in Suetonius which lifts the veil from his imperial unrest more ruthlessly than any legend:— ‘*Incitabatur insomniis maxime ; neque enim plus tribus horis nocturnis quiescebat, ac ne his quidem placidâ quiete, at pavidâ miris rerum imaginibus . . . ideoque magnâ parte noctis, vigiliæ cubandique tædio, nunc toro residens, nunc per longissimas porticus vagus, invocare identidem atque expectare lucem consueverat.*’ This is the very picture of Ennui that has become mortal disease. Nor was Nero different. ‘*Néron,*’ says Victor Hugo, ‘*cherche tout simplement une distraction. Poète, comédien, chanteur, cocher, épuisant la férocité pour trouver la volupté, essayant le changement de sexe, époux de l’eunuque Sporus et épouse de l’esclave Pythagore, et se promenant dans les rues de Rome entre sa femme et son mari ; ayant deux plaisirs : voir le peuple se jeter sur les pièces d’or, les diamants et les perles, et voir les lions se jeter sur le peuple ; incendiaire par curiosité et parricide par désœuvrement.*’ Nor need we stop at Nero. Over Vitellius at his banquets, over Hadrian in his Tiburtine villa calling in vain on Death, over Commodus in the arena, and Heliogabalus among the rose-leaves, the same livid shadow of imperial Ennui hangs. We can even see it looming behind the noble form of Marcus Aurelius, who, amid the ruins of empire and the revolutions of belief, penned in his tent among the Quadi those maxims of endurance which were powerless to regenerate the world.

Roman again, in the true sense of the word, is the Lucretian philosophy of Conscience. Christianity has claimed the celebrated imprecation of Persius upon tyrants for her own, as though to her alone belonged the secret of the soul-tormenting sense of guilt. Yet it is certain that we owe to the Romans that conception of sin bearing its own fruit of torment which the Latin Fathers—Augustine and Tertullian—

imposed with such terrific force upon the mediæval consciousness. There is no need to conclude that Persius was a Christian because he wrote—

Magne pater divum, sævos punire tyrannos, etc.,

when we know that he had before his eyes that passage in the third book of the 'De Rerum Naturâ' (978-1023) which reduces the myths of Tityos and Sisyphus and Cerberus and the Furies to facts of the human soul:—

sed metus in vita pœnarum pro male factis
est insignibus insignis, scelerisque luella,
carcer et horribilis de saxo iactu' deorsum,
verbera carnifices robur pix lammina tædæ ;
quæ tamen etsi absunt, at mens sibi conscia facti
præmetuens adhibet stimulos terretque flagellis
nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
possit nec quæ sit pœnarum denique finis
atque eadem metuit magis hæc ne in morte gravescant.

The Greeks, by personifying those secret terrors, had removed them into a region of existences separate from man. They became dread goddesses, who might to some extent be propitiated by exorcisms or expiatory rites. This was in strict accordance with the mythopœic and artistic quality of the Greek intellect. The stern and somewhat prosaic rectitude of the Roman broke through such figments of the fancy, and exposed the sore places of the soul itself. The theory of the Conscience, moreover, is part of the Lucretian polemic against false notions of the gods and the pernicious belief in hell.

Positivism and Realism were qualities of Roman as distinguished from Greek culture. There was no self-delusion in Lucretius—no attempt, however unconscious, to compromise unpalatable truth, or to invest philosophy with the charm of myth. A hundred illustrations might be chosen to prove his method of setting forth thought with unadorned simplicity. These, however, are familiar to any one who has but opened

the 'De Rerum Naturâ.' It is more profitable to trace this Roman ruggedness in the poet's treatment of the subject which more than any other seems to have preoccupied his intellect and fascinated his imagination—that is Death. His poem has been called by a great critic the 'poem of Death.' Shakspeare's line—

And Death once dead, there's no more dying then,

might be written as a motto on the title-page of the book, which is full of passages like this :—

seire licet nobis nil esse in morte timendum
nec miserum fieri qui non est posse neque hilum
differre anne ullo fuerit iam tempore natus,
mortalem vitam mors cum immortalis ademit.

His whole mind was steeped in the thought of death ; and though he can hardly be said to have written ' the words that shall make death exhilarating,' he devoted his genius, in all its energy, to removing from before men the terror of the doom that waits for all. Sometimes, in his attempt at consolation, he adduces images which, like the Delphian knife, are double-handed, and cut both ways :—

hinc indignatur se mortalem esse creatum
nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium se
qui possit vivus sibi se lugere peremptum
stansque iacentem se lacerari urive dolere.

This suggests, by way of contrast, Blake's picture of the soul that has just left the body and laments her separation. As we read, we are inclined to lay the book down, and wonder whether the argument is, after all, conclusive. May not the spirit, when she has quitted her old house, be forced to weep and wring her hands, and stretch vain shadowy arms to the limbs that were so dear ? No one has felt more profoundly than Lucretius the pathos of the dead. The intensity with

which he realised what we must lose in dying and what we leave behind of grief to those who loved us, reaches a climax of restrained passion in this well-known paragraph :—

‘ iam iam non domus accipiet te læta, neque uxor
optima nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
præripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
non poteris factis florentibus esse, tuisque
præsidium. misero misere ’ aiunt ‘ omnia ademit
una dies infesta tibi tot præmia vitæ.’
illud in his rebus non addunt ‘ nec tibi earum
iam desiderium rerum super insidet una.’
quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,
dissoluant animi magno se angore metuque.
‘ tu quidem ut es leto sopitus, sic eris ævi
quod superest cunctis privato ’ doloribus ægris.
at nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
insatiabiliter deflevimus, æternumque
nulla dies nobis mærorem e pectore demet.’

Images, again, of almost mediæval grotesqueness, rise in his mind when he contemplates the universality of Death. Simonides had dared to say : ‘ One horrible Charybdis waits for all.’ That was as near a discord as a Greek could venture on. Lucretius describes the open gate and ‘ huge wide-gaping maw ’ which must devour heaven, earth, and sea, and all that they contain :—

haut igitur leti præclusa est ianua cælo
nec soli terræque neque altis æquoris undis,
sed patet immani et vasto respectat hiatu.

The ever-during battle of life and death haunts his imagination. Sometimes he sets it forth in philosophical array of argument. Sometimes he touches on the theme with elegiac pity :—

miscetur funere vago
quem pueri tollunt visentis luminis oras ;
nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secutast
quæ non audierit mixtos vagitibus ægris
ploratus mortis comites et funeris atri.

Then again he returns, with obstinate persistence, to describe how the dread of death, fortified by false religion, hangs like a pall over humanity, and how the whole world is a cemetery overshadowed by cypresses. The most sustained, perhaps, of these passages is at the beginning of the third book (lines 31 to 93). The most profoundly melancholy is the description of the new-born child (v. 221):—

quare mors immatura vagatur ?
tum porro puer, ut sævis proiectus ab undis
navita, nudus humi iacet, infans, indigus omni
vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æcumst
cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.

Disease and old age, as akin to Death, touch his imagination with the same force. He rarely alludes to either without some lines as terrible as these (iii. 472, 453):—

nam dolor ac morbus leti fabricator uterquest.
claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua, labat mens.

Another kindred subject affects him with an equal pathos. He sees the rising and decay of nations, age following after age, like waves hurrying to dissolve upon a barren shore, and writes (ii. 75):—

sic rerum summa novatur
semper, et inter se mortales mutua vivunt,
augescunt aliæ gentes, aliæ minuuntur,
inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla animantum
et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.

Although the theme is really the procession of life through countless generations, it obtains a tone of sadness from the sense of intervenient decay and change. No Greek had the heart thus to dilate his imagination with the very element of death. What the Greeks commemorated when they spoke of Death was the loss of the lyre and the hymeneal chaunt, and

the passage across dim waves to a sunless land. Nor indeed does Lucretius, like the modern poet of Democracy, ascend into the regions of ecstatic trance :—

Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

He keeps his reason cool, and sternly contemplates the thought of the annihilation which awaits all perishable combinations of eternal things. Like Milton, Lucretius delights in giving the life of his imagination to abstractions. Time, with his retinue of ages, sweeps before his vision, and he broods in fancy over the illimitable ocean of the universe. The fascination of the infinite is the quality which, more than any other, separates Lucretius as a Roman poet from the Greeks.

Another distinctive feature of his poetry Lucretius inherited as part of his birthright. This is the sense of Roman greatness. It pervades the poem, and may be felt in every part; although to Athens, and the Greek sages, Democritus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, and Epicurus, as the fountain-heads of soul-delivering culture, he reserves his most magnificent periods of panegyric. Yet when he would fain persuade his readers that the fear of death is nugatory, and that the future will be to them even as the past, it is the shock of Rome with Carthage that he dwells upon as the critical event of the world's history (iii. 830) :—

Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,
quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.
et velut anteacto nil tempore sensimus ægrî;
ad configendum venientibus undique Pœnis,
omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu
horrida contremuere sub altis ætheris oris,
in dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum
omnibus humanis esset terraque marique,
sic:

The lines in italics could have been written by none but a

Roman conscious that the conflict with Carthage had decided the absolute empire of the habitable world. In like manner the description of a military review (ii. 323) is Roman: so, too, is that of the amphitheatre (iv. 75):—

et volgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela
et ferrugina, cum magnis intenta theatris
per malos volgata trabesque tremantia flutant.
namque ibi consessum caveai supet et omnem
scenai speciem, patrum cœtumque decorum
inficiunt coguntque suo fluitare colore.

The imagination of Lucretius, however, was habitually less affected by the particular than by the universal. He loved to dwell upon the large and general aspects of things—on the procession of the seasons, for example, rather than upon the landscape of the Campagna in spring or autumn. Therefore it is only occasionally and by accident that we find in his verse touches peculiarly characteristic of the manners of his country. Therefore, again, it has happened that modern critics have detected a lack of patriotic interest in this most Roman of all Latin poets. Also may it here be remembered, that the single line which sums up all the history of Rome in one soul-shaking hexameter, is not Lucretian but Virgilian:—

Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.

The custode of the Baths of Titus, when he lifts his torch to explore those ruined arches, throws the wan light upon one place where a Roman hand has scratched that verse in gigantic letters on the cement. The colossal genius of Rome seems speaking to us, an oracle no lapse of time can render dumb.

But Lucretius is not only the poet *par excellence* of Rome. He will always rank also among the first philosophical poets of the world: and here we find a second standpoint for inquiry. The question how far it is practicable to express

philosophy in verse, and to combine the accuracy of scientific language with the charm of rhythm and the ornaments of the fancy, is one which belongs rather to modern than to ancient criticism. In the progress of culture there has been an ever-growing separation between the several spheres of intellectual activity. What Livy said about the Roman Empire is true now of knowledge: *magnitudine laborat sua*; so that the labour of specialising and distinguishing has for many centuries been all-important. Not only do we disbelieve in the desirability of smearing honey upon the lip of the medicine-glass through which the draught of erudition has to be administered; but we know for certain that it is only at the meeting-points between science and emotion that the philosophic poet finds a proper sphere. Whatever subject-matter can be permeated or penetrated with strong human feeling is fit for verse. Then the rhythms and the forms of poetry to which high passions naturally move, become spontaneous. The emotion is paramount, and the knowledge conveyed is valuable as supplying fuel to the fire of feeling. There are, were, and always will be high imaginative points of vantage commanding the broad fields of knowledge, upon which the poet may take his station to survey the world and all that it contains. But it has long ceased to be his function to set forth, in any kind of metre, systems of speculative thought or purely scientific truths. This was not the case in the old world. There was a period in the development of the intellect when the abstractions of logic appeared like intuitions, and guesses about the structure of the universe still wore the garb of fancy. When physics and metaphysics were scarcely distinguished from mythology, it was natural to address the Muses at the outset of a treatise of ontology, and to cadence a theory of elemental substances in hexameter verse. Thus the philosophical poems of Xenophanes, Parmenides, and

Empedocles belonged essentially to a transitional stage of human culture.

There is a second species of poetry to which the name of philosophical may be given, though it better deserves that of mystical. Pantheism occupies a middle place between a scientific theory of the universe and a form of religious enthusiasm. It supplies an element in which the poetic faculty can move with freedom: for its conclusions, in so far as they pretend to philosophy, are large and general, and the emotions which it excites are co-extensive with the world. Therefore, Pantheistic mysticism, from the Bhagavadgita of the far East, through the Persian Soofis, down to the poets of our own century, Goethe, and Shelley, and Wordsworth, and Whitman, and many more whom it would be tedious to enumerate, has generated a whole tribe of philosophic singers.

Yet a third class may be mentioned. Here we have to deal with what are called didactic poems. These, like the metaphysical epic, began to flourish in early Greece at the moment when exact thought was dividing itself laboriously from myths and fancies. Hesiod with his poem on the life of man leads the way; and the writers of moral sentences in elegiac verse, among whom Solon and Theognis occupy the first place, follow. Latin literature contributes highly artificial specimens of this kind in the 'Georgics' of Virgil, the stoical diatribes of Persius, and the 'Ars Poetica' of Horace. Didactic verse had a special charm for the genius of the Latin race. The name of such poems in the Italian literature of the Renaissance is legion. The French delighted in the same style under the same influences; nor can we fail to attribute the 'Essay on Man' and the 'Essay on Criticism' of our own Pope to a similar revival in England of Latin forms of art. The taste for didactic verse has declined. Yet in its stead another sort of philosophical poetry has grown up in this century, which, for

the want of a better term, may be called psychological. It deserves this title, inasmuch as the motive-interest of the art in question is less the passion or the action of humanity than the analysis of the same. The 'Faust' of Goethe, the 'Prelude' and 'Excursion' of Wordsworth, Browning's 'Sordello' and Mrs. Browning's 'Aurora Leigh,' together with the 'Musings' of Coleridge and the 'In Memoriam' of Tennyson, may be roughly reckoned in this class. It will be noticed that nothing has been said about professedly religious poetry, much of which attaches itself to mysticism, while some, like the 'Divine Comedy' of Dante, is philosophic in the truest sense of the word.

Where, then, are we to place Lucretius? He was a Roman, imbued with the didactic predilections of the Latin race; and the didactic quality of the 'De Rerum Naturâ' is unmistakable. Yet it would be uncritical to place this poem in the class which derives from Hesiod. It belongs really to the succession of Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Empedocles. As such it was an anachronism. The specific moment in the development of thought at which the Parmenidean Epic was natural has been already described. The Romans of the age of Lucretius had advanced far beyond it. The idealistic metaphysics of the Socratic school, the positive ethics of the Stoics, and the profound materialism of Epicurus, had accustomed the mind to habits of exact and subtle thinking, prolonged from generation to generation upon the same lines of speculative inquiry. Philosophy expressed in verse was out of date. Moreover, the very myths had been rationalised. Euhemerus had even been translated into Latin by Ennius, and his prosaic explanations of Greek legend had found acceptance with the essentially positive Roman intellect. Lucretius himself, it may be said in passing, thought it worth while to offer a philosophical explanation of the Greek mythology. The Cybele of the poets

is shown in one of his sublimest passages (ii. 600-645) to be Earth. To call the sea Neptune, corn Ceres, and wine Bacchus, seems to him a simple folly (ii. 652-657). We have already seen how he reduces the fiends and spectres of the Greek Hades to facts of moral subjectivity (iii. 978-1023). In another place he attacks the worship of Phœbus and the stars (v. 110); in yet another he upsets the belief in the Centaurs, Scylla, and Chimæra (v. 877-924) with a gravity which is almost comic. Such arguments formed a necessary element in his polemic against foul religion (*foeda religio*—*turpis religio*); to deliver men from which (i. 62-112), by establishing firmly in their minds the conviction that the gods exist far away from this world in unconcerned tranquillity (ii. 646), and by substituting the notion of Nature for that of deity (ii. 1090), was the object of his scientific demonstration.

Lucretius, therefore, had outgrown mythology, was hostile to religion, and burned with unsurpassable enthusiasm to indoctrinate his Roman readers with the weighty conclusions of systematised materialism. Yet he chose the vehicle of hexameter verse, and trammelled his genius with limitations which Empedocles, four hundred years before, must have found almost intolerable. It needed the most ardent intellectual passion and the loftiest inspiration to sustain on his far flight a poet who had forged a hoplite's panoply for singing robes. Both passion and inspiration were granted to Lucretius in full measure. And just as there was something contradictory between the scientific subject-matter and the poetical form of his masterpiece, so the very sources of his poetic strength were such as are usually supposed to depress the soul. His passion was for death, annihilation, godlessness. It was not the eloquence, but the force of logic in Epicurus that roused his enthusiasm:—

ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi.

No other poet who ever lived in any age, or any shore, drew inspiration from founts more passionless and more impersonal.

The 'De Rerum Naturâ' is therefore an attempt, unique in its kind, to combine philosophical exposition and poetry in an age when the requirements of the former had already outgrown the resources of the latter. Throughout the poem we trace a discord between the matter and the form. The frost of reason and the fire of fancy war in deadly conflict; for the Lucretian system destroyed nearly everything with which the classical imagination loved to play. It was only in some high ethereal region, before the majestic thought of Death or the new Myth of Nature, that the two faculties of the poet's genius met for mutual support. Only at rare intervals did he allow himself to make artistic use of mere mythology, as in the celebrated exordium of the first book, or the description of the Seasons in the fifth book (737-745). For the most part reason and fancy worked separately: after long passages of scientific explanation, Lucretius indulged his readers with those pictures of unparalleled sublimity and grace which are the charm of the whole poem; or dropping the phraseology of atoms, void, motion, chance, he spoke at times of Nature as endowed with reason and a will (v. 186, 811, 846).

It would be beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the particular form given by Lucretius to the Democritean philosophy. He believed the universe to be composed of atoms, infinite in number, and variable, to a finite extent, in form, which drift slantingly through an infinite void. Their combinations under the conditions of what we call space and time are transitory, while they remain themselves imperishable. Consequently, as the soul itself is corporeally constituted, and as thought and sensation depend on mere material idola, men may divest themselves of any fear of the hereafter. There is no such thing as providence, nor do the

gods concern themselves with the kaleidoscopic medley of atoms in transient combination which we call our world. The latter were points of supreme interest to Lucretius. He seems to have cared for the cosmology of Epicurus chiefly as it touched humanity through ethics and religion. To impartial observers, the identity or the divergence of the forms assumed by scientific hypothesis at different periods of the world's history is not a matter of much importance. Yet a peculiar interest has of late been given to the Lucretian materialism by the fact that physical speculation has returned to what is substantially the same ground. The most modern theories of evolution and of molecular structure may be stated in language which, allowing for the progress made by exact thought during the last twenty centuries, is singularly like that of Lucretius. The Roman poet knew fewer facts than are familiar to our men of science, and was far less able to analyse one puzzle into a whole group of unexplained phenomena. He had besides but a feeble grasp upon those discoveries which subserve the arts of life and practical utility. But as regards *absolute knowledge*—knowledge, that is to say, of what the universe really is, and of how it became what it seems to us to be—Lucretius stood at the same point of ignorance as we, after the labours of Darwin and of Spencer, of Helmholtz and of Huxley, still do. Ontological speculation is as barren now as then, and the problems of existence still remain insoluble. The chief difference indeed between him and modern investigators is that they have been lessoned by the experience of the last two thousand years to know better the depths of human ignorance, and the directions in which it is possible to sound them.

It may not be uninteresting to collect a few passages in which the Roman poet has expressed in his hexameters the lines of thought adopted by our most advanced theorists.

Here is the general conception of Nature, working by her own laws toward the achievement of that result which we apprehend through the medium of the senses (ii. 1090) :—

Quæ bene cognita si teneas, natura videtur
libera continuo dominis privata superbis
ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere expers.

Here again is a demonstration of the absurdity of supposing that the world was made for the use of men (v. 156) :—

dicere porro hominum causa voluisse parare
præclaram mundi naturam proptereaque
adlaudabile opus divom laudare decere
æternumque putare atque immortale futurum
nec fas esse, deum quod sit ratione vetusta
gentibus humanis fundatum perpetuo ævo,
sollicitare suis ulla vi ex sedibus umquam
nec verbis vexare et ab imo evertere summa,
cetera de genere hoc adfingere et addere, Memmi,
desiperest.

A like cogent rhetoric is directed against the arguments of teleology (iv. 823) :—

Illud in his rebus vitium vementer avessis
effugere, errorem vitareque præmetuenter,
lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata,
prospicere ut possemus, et ut proferre queamus
proceros passus, ideo fastigia posse
surarum ac feminum pedibus fundata plicari,
bracchia tum porro validis ex apta lacertis
esse manusque datas utraque ex parte ministras,
ut facere ad vitam possemus quæ foret usus.
cetera de genere hoc inter quæcumque pretantur
omnia perversa præpostera sunt ratione,
nil ideo quoniam natumst in corpore ut uti
possemus, sed quod natumst id procreat usum.
nec fuit ante videre oculorum lumina nata
nec dictis orare prius quam lingua creatast,
sed potius longe linguæ præcessit origo
sermonem multoque creatæ sunt prius aures

quam sonus est auditus, et omnia denique membra
ante fuere, ut opinor, eorum quam foret usus.
haud igitur potuere utendi crescere causa.

The ultimate dissolution and the gradual decay of the terrestrial globe is set forth in the following luminous passage (ii. 1148):—

Sic igitur magni quoque circum mœnia mundi
expugnata dabunt labem putrisque ruinas.
iamque adeo fracta est ætas effetaque tellus
vix animalia parva creat quæ cuncta creavit
sæcla deditque ferarum ingentia corpora partu.¹

The same mind which recognised these probabilities knew also that our globe is not single, but that it forms one among an infinity of sister orbs (ii. 1084):—

quapropter cælum simili ratione fatendumst
terramque et solem lunam mare, cetera quæ sunt
non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali.²

When Lucretius takes upon himself to describe the process of becoming which made the world what it now is, he seems to incline to a theory not at all dissimilar to that of unassisted evolution (v. 419):—

nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
ordine se suo quæque sagaci mente locarunt
nec quos quæque darent motus pepigere profecto,
sed quia multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quæcumque inter se possent congressa creare,
propterea fit uti magnum volgata per ævum
omne genus cœtus et motus experiundo

¹ Compare book v. 306–317 on the evidences of decay continually at work in the fabric of the world.

² The same truth is insisted on with even greater force of language in vi. 649–652.

tandem convenient ea quæ convecta repente
 magnarum rerum fiunt exordia sæpe,
 terrarum maris et cæli generisque animantum.

Entering into the details of the process, he describes the many ill-formed, amorphous beginnings of organised life upon the globe, which came to nothing, 'since nature set a ban upon their increase' (v. 837-848); and then proceeds to explain how, in the struggle for existence, the stronger prevailed over the weaker (v. 855-863). What is really interesting in this exposition is that Lucretius ascribes to nature the volition ('convertibat ibi natura foramina terræ; 'quoniam natura absterruit auctum') which has recently been attributed by materialistic speculators to the same maternal power.

To press these points, and to neglect the gap which separates Lucretius from thinkers fortified by the discoveries of modern chemistry, astronomy, physiology, and so forth, would be childish. All we can do is to point to the fact that the circumambient atmosphere of human ignorance, with reference to the main matters of speculation, remains undissipated. The mass of experience acquired since the age of Lucretius is enormous, and is infinitely valuable; while our power of tabulating, methodising, and extending the sphere of experimental knowledge seems to be unlimited. Only ontological deductions, whether negative or affirmative, remain pretty much where they were then.

The fame of Lucretius, however, rests not on this foundation of hypothesis. In his poetry lies the secret of a charm which he will continue to exercise as long as humanity chooses to read Latin verse. No poet has created a world of larger and nobler images, designed with the *sprezzatura* of indifference to mere gracefulness, but all the more fascinating because of the artist's negligence. There is something monumental in the effect produced by his large-sounding single

epithets and simple names. We are at home with the dæmonic life of nature when he chooses to bring Pan and his following before our eyes (iv. 580). Or, again, the Seasons pass like figures on some frieze of Mantegna, to which, by divine accident, has been added the glow of Titian's colouring¹ (v. 737) :—

it ver et Venus, et veris prænuntius ante
pennatus graditur zephyrus, vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater præspargens ante viai
cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
inde loci sequitur calor aridus et comes una
pulverulenta Ceres et etesia flabra aquilonum,
inde autumnus adit, graditur simul Enhius Euan.
inde aliæ tempestates ventique secuntur,
altitonans Voltumnus et auster fulmine pollens.
tandem bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem,
prodit hiemps, sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus alior.

With what a noble style, too, are the holidays of the primeval pastoral folk described (v. 1379-1404). It is no mere celebration of the *bell' età dell' oro*: but we see the woodland glades, and hear the songs of shepherds, and feel the hush of summer among rustling forest trees, while at the same time all is far away, in a better, simpler, larger age. The sympathy of Lucretius for every form of country life was very noticeable. It belonged to that which was most deeply and sincerely poetic in the Latin genius, whence Virgil drew his sweetest strain of melancholy, and Horace his most unaffected pictures, and Catullus the tenderness of his best lines on Sirmio. No Roman surpassed the pathos with which

¹ The elaborate illustration of the first four lines of this passage, painted by Botticelli (in the Florence Academy of Fine Arts), proves Botticelli's incapacity or unwillingness to deal with the subject in the spirit of the original. It is graceful and 'subtle' enough, but not Lucretian.

Lucretius described the separation of a cow from her calf (ii. 352-365). The same note indeed was touched by Virgil in his lines upon the forlorn nightingale, and in the peroration to the third 'Georgic.' But the style of Virgil is more studied, the feeling more artistically elaborated. It would be difficult to parallel such Lucretian passages in Greek poetry. The Greeks lacked an undefinable something of rusticity which dignified the Latin race. This quality was not altogether different from what we call homeliness. Looking at the busts of Romans, and noticing their resemblance to English country gentlemen, I have sometimes wondered whether the Latin genius, just in those points where it differed from the Greek, was not approximated to the English.

All subjects needing a large style, brief and rapid, but at the same time luminous with imagination, were sure of the right treatment from Lucretius. This is shown by his enumeration of the celestial signs (v. 1188):—

in cæloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
per cælum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagæque faces cæli flammæque volantes,
nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.

Again, he never failed to rise to an occasion which required the display of fervid eloquence. The Roman eloquence, which in its energetic volubility was the chief force of Juvenal, added a tidal strength and stress of storm to the quick gathering thoughts of the greater poet. The exordia to the first and second books, the analysis of Love in the fourth, the praises of Epicurus in the third and fifth, the praises of Empedocles and Ennius in the first, the elaborate passage on the progress of civilisation in the fifth, and the description of the plague at

Athens which closes the sixth, are noble instances of the sublimest poetry sustained and hurried onward by the volume of impassioned improvisation. It is difficult to imagine that Lucretius wrote slowly. The strange word *vociferari*, which he uses so often, and which the Romans of the Augustan age almost dropped from their poetic vocabulary, seems exactly made to suit his utterance. Yet at times he tempers the full torrent of resonant utterance with divine tranquillity, and leaves upon our mind that sense of powerful aloofness from his subject, which only belongs to the mightiest poets in their most majestic moments. One instance of this rare felicity of style shall end the list of our quotations (v. 1194) :—

O genus infelix humanum, talia divis
 cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbis !
 quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis
 volnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribu' nostris !
 nec pietas ullast velatum sæpe videri
 vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
 nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
 ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
 spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
 sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.
 nam cum suspicimus magni cælestia mundi
 templa, super stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,
 et venit in mentem solis lunæque viarum,
 tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura
 illa quoque expergefatum caput erigere infit,
 ne quæ forte deum nobis immensa potestas
 sit, vario motu quæ candida sidera verset.
 temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas,
 ecquænam fuerit mundi genitælis origo,
 et simul ecquæ sit finis, quoad mœnia mundi
 solliciti motus hunc possint ferre laborem,
 an divinitus æterna donata salute
 perpetuo possint ævi labentia tractu
 inmensi validas ævi contemnere viris.

It would be impossible to adduce from any other poet a

passage in which the deepest doubts and darkest terrors and most vexing questions that beset the soul, are touched with an eloquence more stately and a pathos more sublime. Without losing the sense of humanity, we are carried off into the infinite. Such poetry is as imperishable as the subject of which it treats.

ANTINOUS

VISITORS to picture and sculpture galleries are haunted by the forms of two handsome young men—Sebastian and Antinous. Both were saints: the one of decadent Paganism, the other of mythologising Christianity. According to the popular beliefs to which they owed their canonisation, both suffered death in the bloom of earliest manhood for the faith that burned in them. There is, however, this difference between the two—that whereas Sebastian is a shadowy creature of the pious fancy, Antinous preserves a marked and unmistakable personality. All his statues are distinguished by unchanging characteristics. The pictures of Sebastian vary according to the ideal of adolescent beauty conceived by each successive artist. In the frescoes of Perugino and Luini he shines with the pale pure light of saintliness. On the canvas of Sodoma he reproduces the voluptuous charm of youthful Bacchus, with so much of anguish in his martyred features as may serve to heighten his dæmonic fascination. On the richer panels of the Venetian masters he glows with a flame of earthly passion aspiring heavenward. Under Guido's hand he is a model of mere carnal comeliness. And so forth through the whole range of the Italian painters. We know Sebastian only by his arrows. The case is very different with Antinous. Depicted under diverse attributes—as Hermes of the wrestling-ground, as Aristæus or Vertumnus, as Dionysus, as Ganymede, as Herakles, or as a god of ancient Egypt—his individuality is always prominent. No metamorphosis of

divinity can change the lineaments he wore on earth. And this difference, so marked in the artistic presentation of the two saints, is no less striking in their several histories. The legend of Sebastian tells us nothing to be relied upon, except that he was a Roman soldier converted to the Christian faith, and martyred. In spite of the perplexity and mystery that involve the death of Antinous in impenetrable gloom, he is a true historic personage, no phantom of myth, but a man as real as Hadrian, his master.

Antinous, as he appears in sculpture, is a young man of eighteen or nineteen years, almost faultless in his form. His beauty is not of a pure Greek type. Though perfectly proportioned and developed by gymnastic exercises to the true athletic fulness, his limbs are round and florid, suggesting the possibility of early over-ripeness. The muscles are not trained to sinewy firmness, but yielding and elastic; the chest is broad and singularly swelling; and the shoulders are placed so far back from the thorax that the breasts project beyond them in a massive arch. It has been asserted that one shoulder is slightly lower than the other. Some of the busts seem to justify this statement; but the appearance is due probably to the different position of the two arms, one of which, if carried out, would be lifted and the other be depressed. The legs and arms are modelled with exquisite grace of outline; yet they do not show that readiness for active service which is noticeable in the statues of the Meleager, the Apoxyomenos, or the Belvedere Hermes. The whole body combines Greek beauty of structure with something of Oriental voluptuousness. The same fusion of diverse elements may be traced in the head. It is not too large, though more than usually broad, and is nobly set upon a massive throat, slightly inclined forwards, as though this posture were habitual; the hair lies thick in clusters, which only form curls at the tips. The fore-

head is low and somewhat square; the eyebrows are level, of a peculiar shape, and very thick, converging so closely as almost to meet above the deep-cut eyes. The nose is straight, but blunter than is consistent with the Greek ideal. Both cheeks and chin are delicately formed, but fuller than a severe taste approves: one might trace in their rounded contours either a survival of infantine innocence and immaturity, or else the sign of rapidly approaching over-bloom. The mouth is one of the loveliest ever carved; but here again the blending of the Greek and Oriental types is visible. The lips, half parted, seem to pout; and the distance between mouth and nostrils is exceptionally short. The undefinable expression of the lips, together with the weight of the brows and slumberous half-closed eyes, gives a look of sulkiness or voluptuousness to the whole face. This, I fancy, is the first impression which the portraits of Antinous produce; and Shelley has well conveyed it by placing the two following phrases, 'eager and impassioned tenderness' and 'effeminate sullenness,' in close juxtaposition.¹ But, after longer familiarity with the whole range of Antinous's portraits, and after study of his life, we are brought to read the peculiar expression of his face and form somewhat differently. A prevailing melancholy, sweetness of temperament overshadowed by resignation, brooding reverie, the innocence of youth touched and saddened by a calm resolve or an accepted doom—such are the sentences we form to give distinctness to a still vague and uncertain impression. As we gaze, Virgil's lines upon the young Marcellus recur to our mind: what seemed sullen, becomes mournful; the unmistakable voluptuousness is transfigured in tranquillity.

After all is said and written, the statues of Antinous do not render up their secret. Like some of the Egyptian gods with whom he was associated, he remains for us a sphinx,

¹ Fragment, *The Coliseum*.

secluded in the shade of a 'mild mystery.' His soul, like the Harpocrates he personated, seems to hold one finger on closed lips, in token of eternal silence. One thing, however, is certain. We have before us no figment of the artistic imagination, but a real youth of incomparable beauty, just as nature made him, with all the inscrutableness of undeveloped character, with all the pathos of a most untimely doom, with the almost imperceptible imperfections that render choice reality more permanently charming than the ideal. It has been disputed whether the Antinous statues are portraits or idealised works of inventive art; and it is usually conceded that the sculptors of Hadrian's age were not able to produce a new ideal type. Critics, therefore, like Helbig and Overbeck, arrive at the conclusion that Antinous was one of nature's masterpieces, modelled in bronze, marble, and granite with almost flawless technical dexterity. Without attaching too much weight to this kind of criticism, it is well to find the decisions of experts in harmony with the instincts of simple observers. Antinous is as real as any man who ever sat for his portrait to a modern sculptor.

But who was Antinous, and what is known of him? He was a native of Bithynium or Claudiopolis, a Greek town claiming to have been a colony from Arcadia, which was situated near the Sangarius, in the Roman province of Bithynia; therefore he may have had pure Hellenic blood in his veins, or, what is more probable, his ancestry may have been hybrid between the Greek immigrants and the native populations of Asia Minor. Antinous was probably born in the first decade of the second century of our era. About his youth and education we know nothing. He first appears upon the scene of the world's history as Hadrian's friend. Whether the Emperor met with him during his travels in Asia Minor, whether he found him among the students of the University at

Athens, or whether the boy had been sent to Rome in his childhood, must remain matter of the merest conjecture. We do not even know for certain whether Antinous was free or a slave. The report that he was one of the Emperor's pages rests upon the testimony of Hegesippus, quoted by a Christian Father, and cannot therefore be altogether relied upon. It receives, however, some confirmation from the fact that Antinous is more than once represented in the company of Hadrian and Trajan in a page's hunting dress upon the basreliefs which adorn the Arch of Constantine. The so-called Antinous-Castor of the Villa Albani is probably of a similar character. Winckelmann, who adopted the tradition as trustworthy, pointed out the similarity between the portraits of Antinous and some lines in Phædrus, which describe a curly-haired *atriensis*. If Antinous took the rank of *atriensis* in the imperial *pædagogium*, his position would have been, to say the least, respectable; for to these upper servants was committed the charge of the *atrium*, where the Romans kept their family archives, portraits, and works of art. Yet he must have quitted this kind of service some time before his death, since we find him in the company of Hadrian upon one of those long journeys in which an *atriensis* would have had no *atrium* to keep. By the time of Hadrian's visit to Egypt, Antinous had certainly passed into the closest relationship with his imperial master; and what we know of the Emperor's inclination towards literary and philosophical society perhaps justifies the belief that the youth he admitted to his friendship had imbibed Greek culture, and had been initiated into those cloudy metaphysics which amused the leisure of semi-Oriental thinkers in the last age of decaying Paganism.

It was a moment in the history of the human mind when East and West were blending their traditions to form the husk of Christian creeds and the fantastic visions of neo-Platonism.

Rome herself had received with rapture the strange rites of Nilotic and of Syrian superstition. Alexandria was the forge of fanciful imaginations, the majority of which were destined to pass like vapours and leave not a wrack behind, while a few fastened with the force of dogma on the conscience of awakening Christendom. During Hadrian's reign it was still uncertain which among the many hybrid products of that motley age would live and flourish; and the Emperor, we know, dreamed fondly of reviving the cults and restoring the splendour of degenerate Hellas. At the same time he was not averse to the more mystic rites of Egypt: in his villa at Tivoli he built a Serapeum, and named one of its quarters Canopus. What part Antinous may have taken in the projects of his friend and master we know not; yet, when we come to consider the circumstances of his death, it may not be superfluous to have thus touched upon the intellectual conditions of the world in which he lived. The mixed blood of the boy, born and bred in a Greek city near the classic ground of Dindymean rites, and his beauty, blent of Hellenic and Eastern qualities, may also not unprofitably be remembered. In such a youth, nurtured between Greece and Asia, admitted to the friendship of an emperor for whom neo-Hellenism was a life's dream in the midst of grave state-cares, influenced by the dark and symbolical creeds of a dimly apprehended East, might there not have lurked some spark of enthusiasm combining the impulses of Atys and Aristogeiton, pathetic even in its inefficiency when judged by the light of modern knowledge, but heroic at that moment in its boundless vista of great deeds to be accomplished?

After journeying through Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia, Hadrian, attended by Antinous, came to Egypt. He there restored the tomb of Pompey, near Pelusium, with great magnificence, and shortly afterwards

embarked from Alexandria upon the Nile, proceeding on his journey through Memphis into the Thebaïd. When he had arrived near an ancient city named Besa, on the right bank of the river, he lost his friend. Antinous was drowned in the Nile. He had thrown himself, it was believed, into the water ; seeking thus by a voluntary death to substitute his own life for Hadrian's, and to avert predicted perils from the Roman Empire. What these perils were, and whether Hadrian was ill, or whether an oracle had threatened him with approaching calamity, we do not know. Even supposition is at fault, because the date of the event is still uncertain ; some authorities placing Hadrian's Egyptian journey in the year 122, and others in the year 130 A.D. Of the two dates, the second seems the more probable. We are left to surmise that, if the Emperor was in danger, the recent disturbances which followed a new discovery of Apis, may have exposed him to fanatical conspiracy. The same doubt affects an ingenious conjecture that rumours which reached the Roman court of a new rising in Judæa had disturbed the Emperor's mind, and led to the belief that he was on the verge of a mysterious doom. He had pacified the Empire and established its administration on a solid basis. Yet the revolt of the indomitable Jews—more dreaded since the days of Titus than any other perturbation of the imperial economy—would have been enough, especially in Egypt, to engender general uneasiness. However this may have been, the grief of the Emperor, intensified either by gratitude or remorse, led to the immediate canonisation of Antinous. The city where he died was rebuilt, and named after him. His worship as a hero and as a god spread far and wide throughout the provinces of the Mediterranean. A new star, which appeared about the time of his decease, was supposed to be his soul received into the company of the immortals. Medals were struck in his honour,

and countless works of art were produced to make his memory undying. Great cities wore wreaths of red lotos on his feast-day in commemoration of the manner of his death. Public games were celebrated in his honour at the city Antinoë, and also in Arcadian Mantinea. This canonisation may probably have taken place in the fourteenth year of Hadrian's reign, A.D. 130.¹ Antinous continued to be worshipped until the reign of Valentinian.

Thus far I have told a simple story, as though the details of the youth's last days were undisputed. Still we are as yet but on the threshold of the subject. All that we have any right to take for uncontested is that Antinous passed from this life near the city of Besa, called thereafter Antinoopolis or Antinoë. Whether he was drowned by accident, whether he drowned himself in order to save Hadrian by vicarious suffering, or whether Hadrian sacrificed him in order to extort the secrets of fate from blood-propitiated deities, remains a question buried in the deepest gloom. With a view to throwing such light as is possible upon the matter, we must proceed to summon in their order the most trustworthy authorities among the ancients.

Dion Cassius takes precedence. In compiling his life of Hadrian, he had beneath his eyes the Emperor's own 'Commentaries,' published under the name of the freedman Phlegon. We therefore learn from him at least what the

¹ Overbeck, Hausrath, and Mommsen, following apparently the conclusions arrived at by Flemmer in his work on Hadrian's journeys, place it in 130 A.D. This would leave an interval of only eight years between the deaths of Antinous and Hadrian. It may here be observed that two medals of Antinous, referred by Rasche with some hesitation to the Egyptian series, bear the dates of the eighth and ninth years of Hadrian's reign. If these coins are genuine, and if we accept Flemmer's conclusions, they must have been struck in the lifetime of Antinous. Neither of them represents Antinous with the insignia of deity: one gives the portrait of Hadrian upon the reverse.

friend of Antinous wished the world to know about his death ; and though this does not go for much, since Hadrian is himself an accused person in the suit before us, yet the whole Roman Empire may be said to have accepted his account, and based on it a pious cult that held its own through the next three centuries of growing Christianity. Dion, in the abstract of his history compiled by Xiphilinus, speaks then to this effect : ‘ In Egypt he also built the city named after Antinous. Now Antinous was a native of Bithynium, a city of Bithynia, which we also call Claudiopolis. He was Hadrian’s favourite, and he died in Egypt : whether by having fallen into the Nile, as Hadrian writes, or by having been sacrificed, as the truth was. For Hadrian, as I have said, was in general over-much given to superstitious subtleties, and practised all kinds of sorceries and magic arts. At any rate he so honoured Antinous, whether because of the love he felt for him, or because he died voluntarily, since a willing victim was needed for his purpose, that he founded a city in the place where he met this fate, and called it after him, and dedicated statues, or rather images, of him in, so to speak, the whole inhabited world. Lastly, he affirmed that a certain star which he saw was the star of Antinous, and listened with pleasure to the myths invented by his companions about this star having really sprung from the soul of his favourite, and having then for the first time appeared. For which things he was laughed at.’

We may now hear what Spartian, in his ‘ *Vita Hadriani*,’ has to say : ‘ He lost his favourite, Antinous, while sailing on the Nile, and lamented him like a woman. About Antinous reports vary, for some say that he devoted his life for Hadrian, while others hint what his condition seems to prove, as well as Hadrian’s excessive inclination to luxury. Some Greeks, at the instance of Hadrian, canonised him, asserting that oracles were

given by him, which Hadrian himself is supposed to have made up.'

In the third place comes Aurelius Victor: 'Others maintain that this sacrifice of Antinous was both pious and religious; for when Hadrian was wishing to prolong his life, and the magicians required a voluntary vicarious victim, they say that, upon the refusal of all others, Antinous offered himself.'

These are the chief authorities. In estimating them we must remember that, though Dion Cassius wrote less than a century after the event narrated, he has come down to us merely in fragments and in the epitome of a Byzantine of the twelfth century, when everything that could possibly be done to discredit the worship of Antinous, and to blacken the memory of Hadrian, had been attempted by the Christian Fathers. On the other hand, Spartianus and Aurelius Victor compiled their histories at too distant a date to be of first-rate value. Taking the three reports together, we find that antiquity differed about the details of Antinous's death. Hadrian himself averred that his friend was drowned; and it was surmised that he had drowned himself in order to prolong his master's life. The courtiers, however, who had scoffed at Hadrian's fondness for his favourite, and had laughed to see his sorrow for his death, somewhat illogically came to the conclusion that Antinous had been immolated by the Emperor, either because a victim was needed to prolong his life, or because some human sacrifice was required in order to complete a dark mysterious magic rite. Dion, writing not very long after the event, believed that Antinous had been immolated for some such purpose with his own consent. Spartian, who wrote at the distance of more than a century, felt uncertain about the question of self-devotion; but Aurelius Victor, following after the interval of another century, unhesitatingly adopted Dion's view, and gave it a fresh colour. This opinion he summarised in a

compact, authoritative form, upon which we may perhaps found an assumption that the belief in Antinous, as a self-devoted victim, had been gradually growing through two centuries.

There are therefore three hypotheses to be considered. The first is that Antinous died an accidental death by drowning; the second is, that Antinous, in some way or another, gave his life willingly for Hadrian's; the third is, that Hadrian ordered his immolation in the performance of magic rites.

For the first of the three hypotheses we have the authority of Hadrian himself, as quoted by Dion. The simple words *εἰς τὸν Νεῖλον ἐκπεσὼν* imply no more than accidental death; and yet, if the Emperor had believed the story of his favourite's self-devotion, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have recorded it in his 'Memoirs.' Accepting this view of the case, we must refer the deification of Antinous wholly to Hadrian's affection; and the tales of his *devotio* may have been invented partly to flatter the Emperor's grief, partly to explain its violence to the Roman world. This hypothesis seems, indeed, by far the most natural of the three; and if we could strip the history of Antinous of its mysterious and mythic elements, it is rational to believe that we should find his death a simple accident. Yet our authorities prove that writers of history among the ancients wavered between the two other theories of (i) Self-Devotion and (ii) Immolation, with a bias toward the latter. These, then, have now to be considered with some attention. Both, it may parenthetically be observed, relieve Antinous from a moral stigma, since in either case a pure untainted victim was required.

If we accept the former of the two remaining hypotheses, we can understand how love and gratitude, together with sorrow, led Hadrian to canonise Antinous. If we accept the latter, Hadrian's sorrow itself becomes inexplicable; and we

must attribute the foundation of Antinoë and the deification of Antinous to remorse. It may be added, while balancing these two solutions of the problem, that cynical sophists, like Hadrian's Græculi, were likely to have put the worst construction on the Emperor's passion, and to have invented the worst stories concerning the favourite's death. To perpetuate these calumnious reports was the real interest of the Christian apologists, who not unnaturally thought it scandalous that a handsome page should be deified. Thus, at first sight, the balance of probability inclines toward the former of the two solutions, while the second may be rejected as based upon court-gossip and religious animosity. Attention may also again be called to the fact that Hadrian ventured to publish an account of Antinous quite inconsistent with what Dion chose to call the truth, and that virtuous Emperors like the Antonines did not interfere with a cult, which, had it been paid to the mere victim of Hadrian's passion and his superstition, would have been an infamy even in Rome. Moreover, that cult was not, like the creations of the impious emperors, forgotten or destroyed by public acclamation. It took root and flourished apparently, as we shall see, because it satisfied some craving of the popular religious sense, and because the people believed that this man had died for his friend. It will not, however, do to dismiss the two hypotheses so lightly.

The alternative of self-devotion presents itself under a double aspect. Antinous may either have committed suicide by drowning with the intention of prolonging the Emperor's life, or he may have offered himself as a voluntary victim to the magicians, who required a sacrifice for a similar purpose. Spartian's brief phrase, *aliis eum devotum pro Hadriano*, may seem to point to the first form of self-devotion; the testimony of Aurelius Victor clearly supports the second: yet it does not much matter which of the two explanations we adopt.

The point is whether Antinous gave his life willingly to save the Emperor's, or whether he was murdered for the satisfaction of some superstitious curiosity. It was absolutely necessary that the vicarious victim should make a free and voluntary oblation of himself. That the notion of vicarious suffering was familiar to the ancients is sufficiently attested by the phrases ἀντίψυχοι, ἀντανδροί, and *hostia succidanea*. We find traces of it in the legend of Alcestis, who died for Admetus, and of Cheiron, who took the place of Prometheus in Hades. Suetonius records that in the first days of Caligula's popularity, when he was labouring under dangerous illness, many Romans of both sexes vowed their lives for his recovery in temples of the gods. That this superstition retained a strong hold on the popular imagination in the time of Hadrian is proved by the curious affirmation of Aristides, a contemporary of that Emperor. He says that once, when he was ill, a certain Philumene offered her soul for his soul, her body for his body, and that, upon his own recovery, she died. On the same testimony it appears that her brother Hermeas had also died for Aristides. This faith in the efficacy of substitution is persistent in the human race. Not long ago a Christian lady was supposed to have vowed her own life for the prolongation of that of Pope Pius IX., and good Catholics inclined to the belief that the sacrifice had been accepted. We shall see that in the first centuries of Christendom the popular conviction that Antinous had died for Hadrian brought him into inconvenient rivalry with Christ, whose vicarious suffering was the cardinal point of the new creed.

The alternative of immolation has next to be considered. The question before us here is, Did Hadrian sacrifice Antinous for the satisfaction of a superstitious curiosity, and in the performance of magic rites? Dion Cassius uses the word *ιεροσυγγεῖς*, and explains it by saying that Hadrian needed a voluntary

human victim for the accomplishment of an act of divination in which he was engaged. Both Spartian and Dion speak emphatically of the Emperor's proclivities to the black art; and all antiquity agreed about this trait in his character. Ammianus Marcellinus spoke of him as '*futurorum sciscitationi nimis deditum.*' Tertullian described him as '*curiositatum omnium exploratorem.*' To multiply such phrases would, however, be superfluous, for they are probably mere repetitions from the text of Dion. That human victims were used by the Romans of the Empire seems certain. Lampridius, in the 'Life of Heliogabalus,' records his habit of slaying handsome and noble youths, in order that he might inspect their entrails. Eusebius, in his 'Life of Maxentius,' asserts the same of that Emperor. *Quum inspiceret exta puerilia, νεογῶν σπλάγχνα βρέφωv διερευνομένου,* are the words used by Lampridius and Eusebius. Justin Martyr speaks of *ἐποπτεύσεις παίδων ἀδιαφθόρων*. Caracalla and Julian are credited with similar bloody sacrifices. Indeed, it may be affirmed in general that tyrants have ever been eager to foresee the future and to extort her secrets from Fate, stopping short at no crime in the attempt to quiet a corroding anxiety for their own safety. What we read about Italian despots—Ezzelino da Romano, Sigismondo Malatesta, Filippo Maria Visconti, and Pier Luigi Farnese—throws light upon the practice of their Imperial predecessors; while the mysterious murder of the beautiful Astorre Manfredi by the Borgias in Hadrian's Mausoleum has been referred by modern critics of authority to the same unholy curiosity. That Hadrian laboured under this moral disease, and that he deliberately used the body of Antinous for *extispicium*, is, I think, Dion's opinion. But are we justified in reckoning Hadrian among these tyrants? That must depend upon our view of his character.

Hadrian was a man in whom the most conflicting qualities

were blent. In his youth and through his whole life he was passionately fond of hunting; hardy, simple in his habits, marching bareheaded with his legions through German frost and Nubian heat, sharing the food of his soldiers, and exercising the most rigid military discipline. At the same time he has aptly been described as 'the most sumptuous character of antiquity.' He filled the cities of the empire with showy buildings, and passed his last years in a kind of classic Munich, where he had constructed imitations of every celebrated monument in Europe. He was so far fond of nature that, anticipating the most recently developed of modern tastes, he ascended Mount Ætna and the Mons Casius, in order to enjoy the spectacle of sunrise. In his villa at Tivoli he indulged a trivial fancy by christening one garden Tempe and another the Elysian Fields; and he had his name carved on the statue of the vocal Memnon with no less gusto than a modern tourist: *audivi voces divinas*. His memory was prodigious, his eloquence in the Latin language studied and yet forcible, his knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy far from contemptible. He enjoyed the society of Sophists and distinguished rhetoricians, and so far affected authorship as to win the unenviable title of *Græculus* in his own lifetime: yet he never neglected state affairs. Owing to his untiring energy and vast capacity for business, he not only succeeded in reorganising every department of the empire, social, political, fiscal, military, and municipal; but he also held in his own hands the threads of all its complicated machinery. He was strict in matters of routine, and appears to have been almost a martinet among his legions: yet in social intercourse he lived on terms of familiarity with inferiors, combining the graces of elegant conversation with the *bonhomie* of boon companionship, displaying a warm heart to his friends, and using magnificent generosity. He restored the

domestic as well as the military discipline of the Roman world ; and his code of laws lasted till Justinian. Among many of his useful measures of reform he issued decrees restricting the power of masters over their slaves, and depriving them of their old capital jurisdiction. His biographers find little to accuse him of beyond a singular avidity for fame, addiction to magic arts and luxurious vices : yet they adduce no proof of his having, at any rate before the date of his final retirement to his Tiburtine villa, shared the crimes of a Nero or a Commodus. On the whole, we must recognise in Hadrian a nature of extraordinary energy, capacity for administrative government, and mental versatility. A certain superficiality, vulgarity, and commonplaceness seems to have been forced upon him by the circumstances of his age, no less than by his special temperament. This quality of the immitigable commonplace is clearly written on his many portraits. Their chief interest consists in a fixed expression of fatigue—as though the man were weary with much seeking and with little finding. In all things, he was somewhat of a dilettante ; and the Nemesis of that sensibility to impressions which distinguishes the dilettante, came upon him ere he died. He ended his days in an appalling and persistent paroxysm of *ennui*, desiring the death which would not come to his relief.

The whole creative and expansive force of Hadrian's century lay concealed in the despised Christian sect. Art was expiring in a sunset blaze of gorgeous imitation, tasteless grandeur, technical elaboration. Philosophy had become sophisticated or mystic ; its real life survived only in the phrase 'entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren' of the Stoics. Literature was repetitive and scholastic. Tacitus, Suetonius, Plutarch, and Juvenal indeed were living ; but their works formed the last great literary triumph of the age. Religion

had degenerated under the twofold influences of scepticism and intrusive foreign cults. It was, in truth, an age in which, for a sound heart and manly intellect, there lay no proper choice except between the stoicism of Marcus Aurelius and the Christianity of the Catacombs. All else had passed into shams, unrealities, and visions. Now Hadrian was neither stoical nor Christian, though he so far coquetted with Christianity as to build temples dedicated to no Pagan deity, which passed in after times for unfinished churches. He was a *Græculus*. In that contemptuous epithet, stripping it of its opprobrious significance, we find the real key to his character. In a failing age he lived a restless-minded, many-sided soldier-prince, whose inner hopes and highest aspirations were for Hellas. Hellas, her art, her history, her myths, her literature, her lovers, her young heroes filled him with enthusiasm. To rebuild her ruined cities, to restore her deities, to revive her golden life of blended poetry and science, to reconstruct her spiritual empire as he had reorganised the Roman world, was Hadrian's dream. It was indeed a dream; one which a far more creative genius than Hadrian's could not have realised.

But now, returning to the two alternatives regarding his friend's death: was this philo-Hellenic Emperor the man to have immolated Antinous for *extispicium* and then deified him? Probably not. The discord between this bloody act and subsequent hypocrisy upon the one hand, and Hadrian's Greek sympathies upon the other, must be reckoned too strong for even such a dipsychic character as his. There is nothing in either Spartian or Dion to justify the opinion that he was naturally cruel or fantastically deceitful. On the other hand, Hadrian's philo-Hellenic, splendour-loving, somewhat tawdry, fame-desiring nature was precisely of the sort to jump eagerly at the deification of a favourite who had either died a

natural death or killed himself to save his master. Hadrian had loved Antinous with a Greek passion in his lifetime. The Roman Emperor was half a god. He remembered how Zeus had loved Ganymede, and raised him to Olympus; how Achilles had loved Patroclus, and performed his funeral rites at Troy; how the demi-god Alexander had loved Hephæstion, and lifted him into a hero's seat on high. He, Hadrian, would do the like, now that death had robbed him of his comrade. The Roman, who surrounded himself at Tivoli with copies of Greek temples, and who called his garden Tempe, played thus at being Zeus, Achilles, Alexander; and the civilised world humoured his whim. Though the Sophists scoffed at his real grief and honourable tears, they consecrated his lost favourite, found out a star for him, carved him in breathing brass, and told tales about his sacred flower. Pancrates was entertained in Alexandria at the public cost for his fable of the lotos; and the lyrist Mesomedes received so liberal a pension for his hymn to Antinous that Antoninus Pius found it needful to curtail it.

After weighing the authorities, considering the circumstances of the age, and estimating Hadrian's character, I am thus led to reject the alternative of immolation. Spartian's own words, *quem muliebriter flevit*, as well as the subsequent acts of the Emperor and the acquiescence of the whole world in the new deity, prove to my mind that in the suggestion of *extispicium* we have one of those covert calumnies which it is impossible to set aside at this distance of time, and which render the history of Roman Emperors and Popes almost impracticable.

The case, then, stands before us thus. Antinous was drowned in the Nile, near Besa, either by accident or by voluntary suicide to save his master's life. Hadrian's love for him had been unmeasured, so was his grief. Both of

them were genuine ; but in the nature of the man there was something artificial. He could not be content to love and grieve alone ; he must needs enact the part of Alexander, and realise, if only by a sort of makebelieve, a portion of his Greek ideal. Antinous, the beautiful servant, was to take the place of Ganymede, of Patroclus, of Hephæstion ; never mind if Hadrian was a Roman and his friend a Bithynian, and if the love between them, as between an emperor of fifty and a boy of nineteen, had been less than heroic. The opportunity was too fair to be missed ; the rôle too fascinating to be rejected. The world, in spite of covert sneers, lent itself to the sham, and Antinous became a god.

The uniformly contemptuous tone of antique authorities almost obliges us to rank this deification of Antinous, together with the Tiburtine villa and the dream of a Hellenic Renaissance, among the part-shams, part-enthusiasms of Hadrian's 'sumptuous' character. Spartian's account of the consecration, and his hint that Hadrian composed the oracles delivered at his favourite's tomb ; Arrian's letter to the Emperor describing the island Leukè and flattering him by an adroit comparison with Achilles ; the poem by Pancrates mentioned in the 'Deipnosophistæ,' which furnished the myth of a new lotos dedicated to Antinous ; the invention of the star, and Hadrian's conversations with his courtiers on this subject—all converge to form the belief that something of consciously unreal mingled with this act of apotheosis by Imperial decree. Hadrian sought to assuage his grief by paying his favourite illustrious honours after death ; he also desired to give the memory of his own love the most congenial and poetical environment, to feed upon it in the daintiest places, and to deck it with the prettiest flowers of fancy. He therefore canonised Antinous, and took measures for disseminating his cult throughout the world, careless of the element of im-

posture which might seem to mingle with the consecration of his true affection. Hadrian's superficial taste was not offended by the gimcrack quality of the new god; and Antinous was saved from being a merely pinchbeck saint by his own charming personality.

This will not, however, wholly satisfy the conditions of the problem; and we are obliged to ask ourselves whether there was not something in the character of Antinous himself, something divinely inspired and irradiate with spiritual beauty, apparent to his fellows and remembered after his mysterious death, which justified his canonisation, and removed it from the region of Imperial makebelieve. If this was not the case, if Antinous died like a flower cropped from the seraglio garden of the court-pages, how should the Emperor in the first place have bewailed him with 'unhusbanded passion,' and the people afterwards have received him as a god? May it not have been that he was a youth of more than ordinary promise, gifted with intellectual enthusiasms proportioned to his beauty and endowed with something of Phœbean inspiration, who, had he survived, might have even inaugurated a new age for the world, or have emulated the heroism of Hypatia in a hopeless cause? Was the link between him and Hadrian formed less by the boy's beauty than by his marvellous capacity for apprehending and his fitness for realising the Emperor's Greek dreams? Did the spirit of neo-Platonism find in him congenial incarnation? At any rate, was there not enough in the then current beliefs about the future of the soul, as abundantly set forth in Plutarch's writings, to justify a conviction that after death he had already passed into the lunar sphere, awaiting the final apotheosis of purged spirits in the sun? These questions may be asked—indeed, they must be asked—for, without suggesting them, we leave the worship of Antinous an almost

inexplicable scandal, an almost unintelligible blot on human nature. Unless we ask them, we must be content to echo the coarse and violent diatribes of Clemens Alexandrinus against the vigils of the deified *exoletus*. But they cannot be answered, for antiquity is altogether silent about him; only here and there, in the indignant utterance of a Christian Father, stung to the quick by Pagan parallels between Antinous and Christ, do we catch a perverted echo of the popular emotion upon which his cult reposed, which recognised his godhood or his vicarious self-sacrifice, and which paid enduring tribute to the sublimity of his young life untimely quenched.

The *senatus consultum* required for the apotheosis of an Emperor was not, so far as we know, obtained in the case of Antinous. Hadrian's determination to exalt his favourite sufficed; and this is perhaps one of the earliest instances of those informal deifications which became common in the later Roman period. Antinous was canonised according to Greek ritual and by Greek priests: *Græci quidam volente Hadriano eum consecraverunt*. How this was accomplished we know not; but forms of canonisation must have been in common usage, seeing that emperors and members of the Imperial family received the honour in due course. The star which was supposed to have appeared soon after his death, and which represented his soul admitted to Olympus, was somewhere near the constellation Aquila, according to Ptolemy, but not part of it. I believe the letters $\eta . \theta . \iota . \kappa . \lambda .$ of Aquila now bear the name of Antinous; but this appropriation dates only from the time of Tycho Brahe. It was also asserted that as a new star had appeared in the skies, so a new flower had blossomed on the earth, at the moment of his death. This was the lotos, of a peculiar red colour, which the people of Lower Egypt used to wear in wreaths upon his festival. It received the name Antinoëan; and the Alexandrian sophist, Pancrates, seeking

to pay a double compliment to Hadrian and his favourite, wrote a poem in which he pretended that this lily was stained with the blood of a Libyan lion slain by the Emperor. As Arrian compared his master to Achilles, so Pancrates flattered him with allusions to Herakles. The lotos, it is well known, was a sacred flower in Egypt. Both as a symbol of the all-nourishing moisture of the earth and of the mystic marriage of Isis and Osiris, and also as an emblem of immortality, it appeared on all the sacred places of the Egyptians, especially on tombs and funeral utensils. To dignify Antinous with the lotos emblem was to consecrate him; to find a new species of the revered blossom and to wear it in his honour, calling it by his name, was to exalt him to the company of gods. Nothing, as it seems, had been omitted that could secure for him the patent of divinity.

He met his death near the city Besa, an ancient Egyptian town upon the eastern bank of the Nile, almost opposite to Hermopolis. Besa was the name of a local god, who gave oracles and predicted future events. But of this Besa we know next to nothing. Hadrian determined to rebuild the city, change its name, and let his favourite take the place of the old deity. Accordingly, he raised a splendid new town in the Greek style; furnished it with temples, agora, hippodrome, gymnasium, and baths; filled it with Greek citizens; gave it a Greek constitution, and named it Antinoë. This new town, whether called Antinoë, Antinoopolis, Antinous, Antinoeia, or even Besantinous (for its titles varied), continued long to flourish, and was mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, together with Copton and Hermopolis, as one of the three most distinguished cities of the Thebaïd. In the age of Julian these three cities were perhaps the only still thriving towns of Upper Egypt. It has even been maintained on Ptolemy's authority that Antinoë was the metropolis

of a nome, called Antinoëitis ; but this is doubtful, since inscriptions discovered among the ruins of the town record no name of nomarch or strategus, while they prove the government to have consisted of a Boulè and a Prytaneus, who was also the Eponymous Magistrate. Strabo reckons it, together with Ptolemais and Alexandria, as governed after the Greek municipal system.

In this city Antinous was worshipped as a god. Though a Greek god, and the eponym of a Greek city, he inherited the place and functions of an Egyptian deity, and was here represented in the hieratic style of Ptolemaic sculpture. A fine specimen of this statuary is preserved in the Vatican, showing how the neo-Hellenic sculptors had succeeded in maintaining the likeness of Antinous without sacrificing the traditional manner of Egyptian piety. The sacred emblems of Egyptian deities were added : we read, for instance, in one passage, that his shrine contained a boat. This boat, like the mystic egg of Erôs or the cista of Dionysos, symbolised the embryo of cosmic life. It was specially appropriated to Osiris, and suggested collateral allusions doubtless to immortality and the soul's journey in another world. Antinous had a college of priests appointed to his service ; and oracles were delivered from the cenotaph inside his temple. The people believed him to be a genius of warning, gracious to his suppliants, but terrible to evil-doers, combining the qualities of the avenging and protective deities. Annual games were celebrated in Antinoë on his festival, with chariot races and gymnastic contests ; and the fashion of keeping his day seems, from Athenæus's testimony, to have spread through Egypt. An inscription in Greek characters discovered at Rome upon the Campus Martius entitles Antinous a colleague of the gods in Egypt—

ANTINOΩΙ ΣΥΝΘΡΟΝΩΙ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΑΙΓΥΠΤΩΙ ΘΕΩΝ.

The worship of Antinous spread rapidly through the Greek and Asian provinces, especially among the cities which owed debts of gratitude to Hadrian or expected from him future favours. At Athens, for example, the Emperor, attended perhaps by Antinous, had presided as Archon during his last royal progress, had built a suburb called after his name, and raised a splendid temple to Olympian Jove. The Athenians, therefore, founded games and a priesthood in honour of the new divinity. Even now, in the Dionysiac theatre, among the chairs above the orchestra assigned to priests of elder deities and more august tradition, may be found one bearing the name of Antinous—ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΟΥ. A marble tablet has also been discovered inscribed with the names of agonothetai for the games celebrated in honour of Antinous; and a stele exists engraved with the crown of these contests together with the crowns of Severus, Commodus, and Antoninus. It appears that the games in honour of Antinous took place both at Eleusis and at Athens; and that the agonothetai, as also the priest of the new god, were chosen from the Ephebi. The Corinthians, the Argives, the Achaïans, and the Epirots, as we know from coins issued by the priests of Antinous, adopted his cult;¹ but the region of Greece proper where it flourished most was Arcadia, the mother state of his Bithynian birthplace. Pausanias, who lived contemporaneously with Antinous, and might have seen him, though he tells us that he had not chanced to meet the youth alive, mentions the temple of Antinous at Mantinea as the newest in that city. 'The Mantineans,' he says, 'reckon Antinous among their gods.' He then describes the yearly festival and mysteries connected

¹ For example:

ΟΣΤΙΑΙΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΟΣ Ο ΙΕΡΕΥΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΟΥ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΧΑΙΟΙΣ
and a similar inscription for Corinth.

with his cult, the quinquennial games established in his honour, and his statues. The gymnasium had a cell dedicated to Antinous, adorned with pictures and fair stone-work. The new god was in the habit of Dionysus.

As was natural, his birthplace paid him special observance. Coins dedicated by the province of Bithynia, as well as by the town Bithynium, are common, with the epigraphs, ANTINOY H ΠΑΤΡΙΣ and ANTINOON ΘΕΟΝ Η ΠΑΤΡΙΣ. Among the cities of Asia Minor and the vicinity the new cult seems to have been widely spread. Adramyttene in Mysia, Alabanda, Ancyra in Galatia, Chalcedon, Cuma in Æolis, Cyzicum in Mysia, the Ciani, the Hadrianotheritæ of Bithynia, Hierapolis in Phrygia, Nicomedia, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Tarsus, the Tianians of Paphlagonia, and a town Rhesæna in Mesopotamia, all furnish their quota of medals. On the majority of these medals he is entitled Herôs, but on others he has the higher title of god; and he seems to have been associated in each place with some deity of local fame.

Being essentially a Greek hero, or divinised man received into the company of immortals and worshipped with the attributes of god, his cult took firmer root among the neo-Hellenic provinces of the empire than in Italy. Yet there are signs that even in Italy he found his votaries. Among these may first be mentioned the comparative frequency of his name in Roman inscriptions, which have no immediate reference to him, but prove that parents gave it to their children. The discovery of his statues in various cities of the Roman Campagna shows that his cult was not confined to one or two localities. Naples in particular, which remained in all essential points a Greek city, seems to have received him with acclamation. A quarter of the town was called after his name, and a phratry of priests was founded in connection with his worship. The Neapolitans owed much to the patronage of Hadrian, and they repaid him

after this fashion. At the beginning of the last century Raffaello Fabretti discovered an inscription near the Porta S. Sebastiano at Rome, which throws some light on the matter. It records the name of a Roman knight, Sufenas, who had held the office of Lupercus and had been a fellow of the Neapolitan phratría of Antinous—*fretríaco Neapoli Antinoiton et Eunostidon*. Eunostos was a hero worshipped at Tanagra in Bœotia, where he had a sacred grove no female foot might enter; and the wording of the inscription leaves it doubtful whether the Eunostidæ and Antinoitæ of Naples were two separate colleges, or whether the heroes were associated as the common patrons of one brotherhood.

A valuable inscription discovered in 1816 near the Baths at Lanuvium or Lavigna shows that Antinous was here associated with Diana as the saint of a benefit club. The rules of the confraternity prescribe the payments and other contributions of its members, provide for their assembling on the feast days of their patrons, fix certain fines, and regulate the ceremonies and expenses of their funerals. This club seems to have resembled modern burial societies, as known to us in England; or still more closely to have been formed upon the same model as Italian confraternità of the Middle Ages. The Lex, or table of regulations, was drawn up in the year 133 A.D. It fixes the birthday of Antinous as v. k. Decembr., and alludes to the temple of Antinous—*Tetrastýlo Antinoi*. Probably we cannot build much on the birthday as a genuine date, for the same table gives the birthday of Diana; and what was wanted was not accuracy in such matters, but a settled anniversary for banquets and pious celebrations. When we come to consider the divinity of Antinous, it will be of service to remember that at Lanuvium, together with Diana of the nether world, he was reckoned among the saints of sepulture. Could this thought have penetrated the imagination of his worshippers: that since

Antinous had given his life for his friend, since he had faced death and triumphed over it, winning immortality and godhood for himself by sacrifice, the souls of his votaries might be committed to his charge and guidance on their journey through the darkness of the tomb? Could we venture to infer thus much from his selection by a confraternity existing for the purpose of securing decent burial or pious funeral rites, the date of its formation, so soon after his death, would confirm the hypothesis that he was known to have devoted his life for Hadrian.

While speaking of Antinous as a divinised man, adscript to the gods of Egypt, accepted as hero and as god in Hellas, Italy, and Asia Minor, we have not yet considered the nature of his deity. The question is not so simple as it seems at first sight: and the next step to take, with a view to its solution, is to consider the various forms under which he was adored—the phases of his divinity. The coins already mentioned, and the numerous works of glyptic art surviving in the galleries of Europe, will help us to place ourselves at the same point of view as the least enlightened of his antique votaries. Reasoning upon these data by the light of classic texts, may afterwards enable us to assign him his true place in the Pantheon of decadent and uninventive Paganism.

In Egypt, as we have already seen, Antinous was worshipped by the neo-Hellenes of Antinoopolis as their Eponymous Hero; but he took the place of an elder native god, and was represented in art according to the traditions of Egyptian sculpture. The marble statue of the Vatican is devoid of hieratic emblems. Antinous is attired with the Egyptian head-dress and waistband: he holds a short truncheon firmly clasped in each hand; and by his side is a palm-stump, such as one often finds in statues of the Greek Hermes. Two colossal statues of red granite discovered in the ruins of Hadrian's villa, at Tivoli, represent him in like manner with the usual Egyptian

head-dress. They seem to have been designed for pillars supporting the architrave of some huge portal ; and the wands grasped firmly in both hands are supposed to be symbolical of the genii called *Dii Avernuncii*. Von Levezow, in his monograph upon Antinous in art, catalogues five statues of a similar description to the three already mentioned. From the indistinct character of all of them, it would appear that Antinous was nowhere identified with any one of the great Egyptian deities, but was treated as a *Dæmon* powerful to punish and protect. This designation corresponds to the contemptuous rebuke addressed by Origen to Celsus, where he argues that the new saint was only a malignant and vengeful spirit. His Egyptian medals are few and of questionable genuineness : the majority of them seem to be purely Hellenic ; but on one he bears a crown like that of Isis, and on another a lotos wreath. The dim records of his cult in Egypt, and the remnants of Græco-Egyptian art, thus mark him out as one of the *Avernuncian* deities, associated perhaps with *Kneph* or the *Agathodæmon* of Hellenic mythology, or approximated to *Anubis*, the Egyptian *Hermes*. Neither statues nor coins throw much light upon his precise place among those gods of Nile whose throne he is said to have ascended. Egyptian piety may not have been so accommodating as that of Hellas.

With the Græco-Roman world the case is different. We obtain a clearer conception of the Antinous divinity, and recognise him always under the mask of youthful gods already honoured with fixed ritual. To worship even living men under the names and attributes of well-known deities was no new thing in Hellas. We may remember the *Ithyphallic* hymn with which the Athenians welcomed *Demetrius Poliorkêtes*, the marriage of Anthony as *Dionysus* to *Athenè*, and the deification of *Mithridates* as *Bacchus*. The Roman Emperors had already been represented in art with the characteristics

of gods—Nero, for example, as Phœbus, and Hadrian as Mars. Such compliments were freely paid to Antinous. On the Achaian coins we find his portrait on the obverse, with different types of Hermes on the reverse, varied in one case by the figure of a ram, in another by the representation of a temple, in a third by a nude hero grasping a spear. One Mysian medal, bearing the epigraph ‘Antinous Iacchus,’ represents him crowned with ivy, and exhibits Demeter on the reverse. A single specimen from Ancyra, with the legend ‘Antinous Herôs,’ depicts the god Lunus carrying a crescent moon upon his shoulder. The Bithynian coins generally give youthful portraits of Antinous upon the obverse, with the title of ‘Herôs’ or ‘Theos;’ while the reverse is stamped with a pastoral figure, sometimes bearing the talaria, sometimes accompanied by a feeding ox or a boar or a star. This youth is supposed to be Philesius, the son of Hermes. In one specimen of the Bithynian series the reverse yields a head of Proserpine crowned with thorns. A coin of Chalcedon ornaments the reverse with a griffin seated near a naked figure. Another, from Corinth, bears the sun-god in a chariot; another, from Cuma, presents an armed Pallas. Bulls, with the crescent moon, occur in the Hadrianotheritan medals: a crescent moon in that of Hierapolis: a ram and star, a female head crowned with towers, a standing bull, and Harpocrates placing one finger on his lips, in those of Nicomedia; a horned moon and star in that of Epirot Nicopolis. One Philadelphian coin is distinguished by Antinous in a temple with four columns; another by an Aphrodite in her cella. The Sardian coins give Zeus with the thunderbolt, or Phœbus with the lyre; those of Smyrna are stamped with a standing ox, a ram, and the caduceus, a female panther and the thyrsus, or a hero reclining beneath a plane-tree; those of Tarsus with the Dionysian cista, the Phœbean tripod, the

river Cydnus, and the epigraphs 'Neos Puthios,' 'Neos Iacchos;' those of the Tiansians with Antinous as Bacchus on a panther, or, in one case, as Poseidôn.

It would be unsafe to suppose that the emblems of the reverse in each case had a necessary relation to Antinous, whose portrait is almost invariably represented on the obverse. They may refer, as in the case of the Tarsian river-god, to the locality in which the medal was struck. Yet the frequent occurrence of the well-known type with the attributes and sacred animals of various deities, and the epigraphs 'Neos Puthios' or 'Neos Iacchos,' justify us in assuming that he was associated with divinities in vogue among the people who accepted his cult—especially Apollo, Dionysus, and Hermes. On more than one coin he is described as Antinous-Pan, showing that his Arcadian compatriots of Peloponnese and Bithynia paid him the compliment of placing him beside their great local deity. In a Latin inscription discovered at Tibur, he is connected with the sun-god of Noricia, Pannonia and Illyria, who was worshipped under the title of Belenus:—

Antinoo et Beleno par ætas famaue par est;
Cur non Antinous sit quoque qui Belenus?

This couplet sufficiently explains the ground of his adscription to the society of gods distinguished for their beauty. Both Belenus and Antinous are young and beautiful: why, therefore, should not Antinous be honoured equally with Belenus? The same reasoning would apply to all his impersonations. The pious imagination or the æsthetic taste tricked out this favourite of fortune in masquerade costumes, just as a wealthy lover may amuse himself by dressing his mistress after the similitude of famous beauties. The analogy of statues confirms this assumption. A considerable majority represent him as Dionysus Kisseus: in some of the best he is conceived as Hermes of the Palæstra or a simple hero: in one he is probably

Dionysus Antheus ; in another Vertumnus or Aristæus ; yet again he is the Agathos Daimon : while a fine specimen preserved in England shows him as Ganymede raising a goblet of wine : a little statue in the Louvre gives him the attributes of youthful Herakles ; a basrelief of somewhat doubtful genuineness in the Villa Albani exhibits him with Romanised features in the character perhaps of Castor. Again, I am not sure whether the Endymion in the celebrated basrelief of the Capitol does not yield a portrait of Antinous.

This rapid enumeration will suffice to show that Antinous was universally conceived as a young deity in bloom, and that preference was given to Phoebus and Iacchus, the gods of divination and enthusiasm, for his associates. In some cases he appears to have been represented as a simple hero without the attributes of any deity. Many of his busts, and the fine nude statues of the Capitol and the Neapolitan Museum, belong to this class, unless we recognise the two last as Antinous under the form of a young Hercules, or of the gymnastic Hermes. But when he comes before us with the title of Puthios, or with the attributes of Dionysus, distinct reference is probably intended in the one case to his oracular quality, in the other to the enthusiasm which led to his death. Allusions to Harpocrates, Lunus, Aristæus, Philesius, Vertumnus, Castor, Herakles, Ganymedes, show how the divinising fancy played around the beauty of his youth, and sought to connect him with myths already honoured in the pious conscience. Lastly, though it would be hazardous to strain this point, we find in his chief impersonations a Chthonian character, a touch of the mystery that is shrouded in the world beyond the grave. The double nature of his Athenian cult may perhaps confirm this view. But, over and above all these symbolic illustrations, one artistic motive of immortal loveliness pervades and animates the series.

It becomes at this point of some moment to determine what was the relation of Antinous to the gods with whom he blended, and whose attributes he shared. It seems tolerably certain that he had no special legend which could be idealised in art. The mythopœic fancy invented no fable for him. His cult was parasitic upon elder cults. He was the colleague of greater well-established deities, from whom he borrowed a pale and evanescent lustre. Speaking accurately, he was a hero or divinised mortal, on the same grade as Helen immortalised for her beauty, as Achilles for his prowess, or as Herakles for his great deeds. But having no poet like Homer to sing his achievements, no myth fertile in emblems, he dwelt beneath the shadow of superior powers, and crept into a place with them. What was this place worth? What was the meaning attached by his votaries to the title *σύνθρονος* or *πάρεδρος θεός*? According to the simple meaning of both epithets, he occupied a seat together with or by the side of the genuine Olympians. In this sense Pindar called Dionysus the *πάρεδρος* of Demeter, because the younger god had been admitted to her worship on equal terms at Eleusis. In this sense Sophocles spoke of Himeros as *πάρεδρος* of the eternal laws, and of Justice as *σύνουκος* with the Chthonian deities. In this sense Euripides makes Helen *ξύνθακος* with her brethren, the Dioscuri. In this sense the three chief Archons at Athens were said to have two *πάρεδροι* apiece. In this sense, again, Hephæstion was named a *θεὸς πάρεδρος*, and Alexander in his lifetime was voted a thirteenth in the company of the twelve Olympians. The divinised emperors were *πάρεδροι* or *σύνθρονοι*; nor did Virgil hesitate to flatter Augustus by questioning into which college of the immortals he would be adscript after death—

Tuque adeo, quem mox quæ sint habitura deorum
Concilia, incertum est.

Conscript deities of this heroic order were supposed to avert evils from their votaries, to pursue offenders with calamity, to inspire prophetic dreams, and to appear, as the phantom of Achilles appeared to Apollonius of Tyana, and answer questions put to them. They corresponded very closely and exactly to the saints of mediævalism, acting as patrons of cities, confraternities, and persons, and interposing between the supreme powers of heaven and their especial devotees. As a *πάρεδρος* of this exalted quality, Antinous was the associate of Phœbus, Bacchus, and Hermes among the Olympians, and a colleague with the gods of Nile. The principal difficulty of grasping his true rank consists in the variety of his emblems and divine disguises.

It must here be mentioned that the epithet *πάρεδρος* had a secondary and inferior signification. It was applied by later authors to the demons or familiar spirits who attended upon enchanters like Simon Magus or Apollonius; and such satellites were believed to be supplied by the souls of innocent young persons violently slain. Whether this secondary meaning of the title indicates a degeneration of the other, and forms the first step of the process whereby classic heroes were degraded into the foul fiends of mediæval fancy, or whether we find in it a wholly new application of the word, is questionable. I am inclined to believe that, while *πάρεδρος θεός* in the one case means an associate of the Olympian gods, *πάρεδρος δαίμων* in the other means a fellow-agent and assessor of the wizard. In other words, however they may afterwards have been confounded, the two uses of the same epithet were originally distinct: so that not every *πάρεδρος θεός*, Achilles, or Hephæstion or Antinous, was supposed to haunt and serve a sorcerer, but only some inferior spirit over whom his black art gave him authority. The *πάρεδρος θεός* was so called because he sat with the great gods. The *πάρεδρος δαίμων* was so

called because he sat beside the magician. At the same time there seems sufficient evidence that the two meanings came to be confounded; and as the divinities of Hellas, with all their lustrous train, paled before the growing splendour of Christ, they gradually fell beneath the necromantic ferule of the witch.

Returning from this excursion, and determining that Antinous was a hero or divinised mortal, adscript to the college of the greater gods, and invested with many of their attributes, we may next ask the question, why this artificial cult, due in the first place to imperial passion and caprice, and nourished by the adulation of fawning provinces, was preserved from the rapid dissolution to which the flimsy products of court-flattery are subject. The mythopoetic faculty was extinct, or in its last phase of decadent vitality. There was nothing in the life of Antinous to create a legend or to stimulate the sense of awe; and yet this worship persisted long after the fear of Hadrian had passed away, long after the benefits to be derived by humouring a royal fancy had been exhausted, long after anything could be gained by playing out the farce. It is clear, from a passage in Clemens Alexandrinus, that the sacred nights of Antinous were observed, at least a century after the date of his deification, with an enthusiasm that roused the anger of the Christian Father. Again, it is worthy of notice that, while many of the noblest works of antiquity have perished, the statues of Antinous have descended to us in fair preservation and in very large numbers. From the contemptuous destruction which erased the monuments of base men in the Roman Empire they were safe; and the state in which we have them shows how little they had suffered from neglect. The most rational conclusion seems to be that Antinous became in truth a popular saint, and satisfied some new need in Paganism, for which none of the elder and more respectable deities sufficed. The novelty of his cult had, no doubt,

something to do with the fascination it exercised ; and something may be attributed to the impulse art received from the introduction of so rare and original a type of beauty into the exhausted cycle of mythical subjects. The blending of Greek and Egyptian elements was also attractive to an age remarkable for its eclecticism. But after allowing for the many adventitious circumstances which concurred to make Antinous the fashion, it is hardly unreasonable to assume that the spirit of poetry in the youth's story, the rumour of his self-devoted death, kept him alive in the memory of the people. It is just that element of romance in the tale of his last hours, that preservative association with the pathos of self-sacrifice, which forms the interest we still feel for him.

The deified Antinous was therefore for the Roman world a charming but dimly felt and undeveloped personality, made perfect by withdrawal into an unseen world of mystery. The belief in the value of vicarious suffering attached itself to his beautiful and melancholy form. His sorrow borrowed something of the universal world-pain, more pathetic than the hero-pangs of Herakles, the anguish of Prometheus, or the passion of Iacchus-Zagreus, because more personal and less suggestive of a cosmic mystery. The ancient cries of Ah Linus, Ah Adonis, found in him an echo. For votaries ready to accept a new god as simply as we accept a new poet, he was the final manifestation of an old-world mystery, the rejuvenescence of a well-known incarnation, the semi-Oriental realisation of a recurring Avatar. And if we may venture on so bold a surmise, this last flower of antique mythology had taken up into itself a portion of the blood outpoured on Calvary. Planted in the conservatory of semi-philosophical yearnings, faintly tintured with the colours of misapprehended Christianity, without inherent stamina, without the powerful nutrition which the earlier heroic fables had derived from the spiritual vigour

of a truly mythopœic age, the cult of Antinous subsisted as an echo, a reflection, the last serious effort of deifying but no longer potent Paganism, the last reverberation of its oracles, an æsthetic rather than a religious product, viewed even in its origin with sarcasm by the educated, and yet sufficiently attractive to enthrall the minds of simple votaries, and to survive the circumstances of its first creation. It may be remembered that the century which witnessed the canonisation of Antinous, produced the myth of Cupid and Psyche—or, if this be too sweeping an assertion, gave it final form, and handed it, in its suggestive beauty, to the modern world. Thus at one and the same moment the dying spirit of Hellas seized upon those doctrines of self-devotion and immortality which, through the triumph of Christian teaching, were gaining novel and incalculable value for the world. According to its own laws of inspiration, it stamped both legends of Love victorious over Death, with beautiful form in myth and poem and statuary.

That we are not altogether unjustified in drawing this conclusion may be gathered from the attitude assumed by the Christian apologists toward Antinous. There is more than the mere hatred of a Pagan hero, more than the bare indignation at a public scandal, in their acrimony. Accepting the calumnious insinuations of Dion Cassius, these gladiators of the new faith found a terrible rhetorical weapon ready to their hands in the canonisation of a court favourite. Prudentius, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Tatian—all inveigh, in nearly the same terms, against the Emperor's Ganymede, exalted to the skies, and worshipped with base fear and adulation by abject slaves. But in Origen, arguing with Celsus, we find a somewhat different keynote struck. Celsus, it appears, had told the story of Antinous, and had compared his cult with that of Christ. Origen replies justly, that there

was nothing in common between the lives of Antinous and of Christ, and that his supposed divinity is a fiction. We can discern in this response an echo of the faith which endeared Antinous to his Pagan votaries. Antinous was hated by the Christians as a rival; insignificant, it is true, and unworthy, but still of sufficient force to be regarded and persecuted. If Antinous had been utterly contemptible, if he had not gained some firm hold upon the piety of Græco-Roman Paganism, Celsus could hardly have ventured to rest an argument upon his worship, nor would Origen have chosen to traverse that argument with solid reasoning, instead of passing it by in rhetorical silence. Nothing is more difficult than to understand the conditions of that age or to sympathise with its dominant passions. Educated as we have been in the traditions of the finally triumphant Christian faith, warmed through and through as we are by its summer glow and autumn splendour, believing as we do in the adequacy of its spirit to satisfy the cravings of the human heart, how can we comprehend a moment in its growth when the divinised Antinous was not merely an object offensive to the moral sense, but also a parody dangerous to the pure form of Christ?

It remains to say somewhat of Antinous as he appears in art. His place in classic sculpture corresponds to his position in antique mythology. The Antinous statues and coins are reflections of earlier artistic masterpieces, executed with admirable skill, but lacking original faculty for idealisation in the artists. Yet there is so much personal attraction in his type, his statues are so manifestly faithful portraits, and we find so great a charm of novelty in his delicately perfect individuality, that the life-romance which they reveal, as through a veil of mystery, has force enough to make them rank among the valuable heirlooms of antiquity. We could almost believe that, while so many gods and heroes of Greece have perished,

Antinous has been preserved in all his forms and phases for his own most lovely sake ; as though, according to Ghiberti's exquisite suggestion, gentle souls in the first centuries of Christianity had spared this blameless youth, and hidden him away with tender hands, in quiet places, from the fury of iconoclasts. Nor is it impossible that the great vogue of his worship was due among the Pagan laity to this same fascination of pure beauty. Could a more graceful temple of the body have been fashioned, after the Platonic theory, for the habitation of a guileless, god-inspired, enthusiastic soul? The personality of Antinous, combined with the suggestion of his self-devoted death, made him triumphant in art as in the affections of the pious.

It would be an interesting task to compose a *catalogue raisonné* of Antinous statues and basreliefs, and to discuss the question of their mythological references. This is, however, not the place for such an inquiry. And yet I cannot quit Antinous without some retrospect upon the most important of his portraits. Among the simple busts, by far the finest, to my thinking, are the colossal head of the Louvre, and the ivy-crowned bronze at Naples. The latter is not only flawless in its execution, but is animated with a pensive beauty of expression. The former, though praised by Winckelmann, as among the two or three most precious masterpieces of antique art, must be criticised for a certain vacancy and lifelessness. Of the heroic statues, the two noblest are those of the Capitol and Naples. The identity of the Capitoline Antinous has only once, I think, been seriously questioned ; and yet it may be reckoned more than doubtful. The head is almost certainly not his. How it came to be placed upon a body presenting so much resemblance to the type of Antinous I do not know. Careful comparison of the torso and the arms with an indubitable portrait will even raise the question whether this fine

statue is not a Hermes or a hero of an earlier age. Its attitude suggests Narcissus or Adonis; and under either of these forms Antinous may properly have been idealised. The Neapolitan marble, on the contrary, yields the actual Antinous in all the exuberant fulness of his beauty. Head, body, pose, alike bring him vividly before us, forming an undoubtedly authentic portrait. The same personality, idealised, it is true, but rather suffering than gaining by the process, is powerfully impressed upon the colossal Dionysus of the Vatican. What distinguishes this great work is the inbreathed spirit of divinity, more overpowering here than in any other of the extant ἀνδριάντες καὶ ἀγάλματα. The basrelief of the Villa Albani, restored to suit the conception of a Vertumnus, has even more of florid beauty; but whether the restoration was wisely made may be doubted. It is curious to compare this celebrated masterpiece of technical dexterity with another basrelief in the Villa Albani, representing Antinous as Castor. He is standing, half clothed with the chlamys, by a horse. His hair is close-cropped, after the Roman fashion, cut straight above the forehead, but crowned with a fillet of lotos-buds. The whole face has a somewhat stern and frowning Roman look of resolution, contrasting with the mild benignity of the Bacchus statues, and the almost sulky voluptuousness of the busts. In the Lateran Museum Antinous appears as a god of flowers, holding in his lap a multitude of blossoms, and wearing on his head a wreath. The conception of this statue provokes comparison with the Flora of the Neapolitan Museum. I should like to recognise in it a Dionysus Antheus, rather than one of the more prosy Roman gods of horticulture. Not unworthy to rank with these first-rate portraits of Antinous is a Ganymede, engraved by the Dilettante Society, which represents him standing alert, in one hand holding the wine-jug and in the other lifting a cup aloft. It will be seen from even this brief enumeration of a

few among the statues of Antinous, how many and how various they are. One, however, remains still to be discussed, which, so far as concerns the story of Antinous, is by far the most interesting of all. As a work of art, to judge by photographs, it is inferior to others in execution and design. Yet could we but understand its meaning clearly, the mystery of Antinous would be solved: the key to the whole matter probably lies here; but, alas! we know not how to use it. I speak of the Ildefonso Group at Madrid.¹

On one pedestal there are three figures in white marble. To the extreme right of the spectator stands a little female statue of a goddess, in archaistic style, crowned with the calathos, and holding a sphere, probably of pomegranate fruit, to her breast. To the left of this image are two young men, three times the height of the goddess, quite naked, standing one on each side of a low altar. Both are crowned with a wreath of leaves and berries—laurel or myrtle. The youth to the right, next the image, holds a torch in either hand: with the right he turns the flaming point downwards, till it lies upon the altar; with the left he lifts the other torch aloft, and rests it on his shoulder. He has a beautiful Græco-Roman face, touched with sadness or ineffable reflection. The second youth leans against his comrade, resting his left arm across the other's back, and this hand is lightly placed upon the shoulder, close to the lifted torch. His right arm is bent, and so placed that the hand just cuts the line of the pelvis a little above the hip. The weight of his body is thrown principally upon the right leg; the left foot is drawn back, away from the altar. It is the attitude of the Apollo Sauroctonus. His beautiful face, bent downward, is intently gazing with a calm, collected, serious, and yet sad cast of earnest meditation. His eyes seem fixed on something beyond him and beneath

¹ See Frontispiece.

him—as it were on an inscrutable abyss ; and in this direction also looks his companion. The face is unmistakably the face of Antinous ; yet the figure, and especially the legs, are not characteristic. They seem modelled after the conventional type of the Greek Ephebus. Parts of the two torches and the lower half of the right arm of Antinous are restorations.

Such is the Ildefonso marble ; and it may be said that its execution is hard and rough—the arms of both figures are carelessly designed ; the hands and fingers are especially angular, elongated, and ill-formed. But there is a noble feeling in the whole group, notwithstanding. F. Tieck, the sculptor and brother of the poet, was the first to suggest that we have here Antinous, the Genius of Hadrian, and Persephone.¹ He also thought that the self-immolation of Antinous was indicated by the loving, leaning attitude of the younger man, and by his melancholy look of resolution. The same view, in all substantial points, is taken by Friedrichs, author of a work on Græco-Roman sculpture. But Friedrichs, while admitting the identity of the younger figure with Antinous, and recognising Persephone in the archaic image, is not prepared to accept the elder as the Gènius of Hadrian ; and it must be confessed that this face does not bear any resemblance to the portraits of the Emperor. According to his interpretation, the Dæmon is kindling the fire upon the sacrificial altar with the depressed torch ; and the second or lifted torch must be supposed to have been needed for the performance of some obscure rite of immolation. What Friedrichs fails to elucidate is the trustful attitude of Antinous, who could scarcely have been conceived as thus affectionately

¹ See the article on Antinous, by Victor Rydberg, in the *Svensk Tidsskrift för Litteratur, Politik, och Ekonomi*. 1875. Stockholm. Also Karl Bötticher, *Königliches Museum, Erklärendes Verzeichniss*. Berlin, 1871.

reclining on the shoulder of a merely sacrificial dæmon; nor is there anything upon the altar to kindle. It must, however, be conceded that the imperfection of the marble at this point leaves the restoration of the altar and the torch upon it doubtful.

Charles Bötticher started a new solution of the principal problem. According to him, it was executed in the lifetime of Antinous; and it represents not a sacrifice of death, but a sacrifice of fidelity on the part of the two friends, Hadrian and Antinous, who have met together before Persephone to ratify a vow of love till death. He suggests that the wreaths are of stephanotis, that large-leaved myrtle, which was sacred to the Chthonian goddesses after the liberation of Semele from Hades by her son Dionysus. With reference to such ceremonies between Greek comrades, Bötticher cites a vase upon which Theseus and Peirithous are sacrificing in the temple of Persephone; and he assumes that there may have existed Athenian groups in marble representing similar vows of friendship, from which Hadrian had this marble copied. He believes that the Genius of Hadrian is kindling one torch at the sacred fire, which he will reach to Antinous, while he holds the other in readiness to kindle for himself. This explanation is both ingenious and beautiful. It has also the great merit of explaining the action of the right arm of Antinous. Yet it is hardly satisfactory. It throws no light upon the melancholy and solemnity of both figures, which irresistibly suggest a funereal rather than a joyous rite. Antinous is not even looking at the altar, and the meditative curves of his beautiful reclining form indicate anything rather than the spirited alacrity with which a friend would respond to his comrade's call at such a moment. Besides, why should not the likeness of Hadrian have been preserved as well as that of Antinous, if the group commemorated an act of their joint

will ? On the other hand, we must admit that the altar itself is not dressed for a funereal sacrifice.

It has been pointed out that in the British Museum there exists a basrelief of Homer's apotheosis where we notice a figure holding two torches. Is it, then, possible that the Ildefonso marble may express, not the sacrifice, but the apotheosis of Antinous, and that the Genius who holds the two torches is conferring on him immortality ? The lifted torch would symbolise his new life, and the depressed torch would stand for the life he had devoted. According to this explanation, the sorrowful expression of Antinous must indicate the agony of death through which he passed into the company of the undying. Against this interpretation is the fact that we have no precise authority for the symbolism of the torches, except only the common inversion of the life-brand by the Genius of Death.

Yet another solution may be suggested. Assuming that we have before us a sacrificial ceremony, and that the group was executed after the self-devotion of Antinous had passed into the popular belief, we may regard the elder youth as either the Genius of the Emperor, separate in spirit from Hadrian himself and presiding over his destinies, who accepts the offer of Antinous with solemn calmness suited to so great a gift ; or else as the Genius of the Roman people, witnessing the same act in the same majestic spirit. This view finds some support in the abstract ideality of the torch-bearer, who is clearly no historical personage as Antinous himself is, but rather a power controlling his fate. The interpretation of the two torches remains very difficult. In the torch flung down upon the flameless and barren altar we might recognise a symbol of Hadrian's life upon the point of extinction, but not yet extinguished ; and in the torch lifted aloft we might find a metaphor of life resuscitated and exalted. Nor is it

perhaps without significance that the arm of the self-immolating youth meets the upraised torch, as though to touch the life which he will purchase with his death. There is, however, the objection stated above to this bold use of symbolism.

In support of any explanation which ascribes this group to a period later than the canonisation of Antinous, it may be repeated that the execution is inferior to that of almost all the other statues of the hero. Is it possible, then, that it belongs to a subsequent date, when art was further on the wane, but when the self-devotion of Antinous had become a dogma of his cult?

After all is said, the Ildefonso marble, like the legend of Antinous, remains a mystery. Only hypotheses, more or less ingenious, more or less suited to our sympathies, varying between Casaubon's coarse vilification and Rydberg's roseate vision, are left us.

As a last note on the subject of Antinous let me refer to Raphael's statue of Jonah in the Chigi Chapel of S. Maria del Popolo at Rome. Raphael, who handled the myth of Cupid and Psyche so magnificently in the Villa Farnesina of his patron Agostino Chigi, dedicated a statue of Antinous—the only statue he ever executed in marble—under the title of a Hebrew prophet in a Christian sanctuary. The fact is no less significant than strange. During the early centuries of Christianity, as is amply proved by the sarcophagi in the Lateran Museum, Jonah symbolised self-sacrifice and immortality. He was a type of Christ, an emblem of the Christian's hope beyond the grave. During those same centuries Antinous represented the same ideas, however inadequately, however dimly, for the unlettered laity of Paganism. It could scarcely have been by accident, or by mere admiration for the features of Antinous, that Raphael, in his marble, blent the Christian

and the Pagan traditions. To unify and to transcend the double views of Christianity and Paganism in a work of pure art was Raphael's instinctive, if not his conscious, aim. Nor is there a more striking instance of this purpose than the youthful Jonah with the head of Hadrian's favourite. Lionardo's Dionysus-John-the-Baptist seems but a careless *jeu d'esprit* compared with this profound and studied symbol of nascent humanism. Thus to regard the Jonah-Antinous of the Cappella Chigi as a type of immortality and self-devotion, fusing Christian and Græco-Roman symbolism in one work of modern art, is the most natural interpretation; but it would not be impossible to trace in it a metaphor of the resurgent Pagan spirit also—as though, leaving Jonah and his Biblical associations in the background, the artist had determined that from the mouth of the monstrous grave should issue not a bearded prophet, but the victorious youth who had captivated with his beauty and his heroism the sunset age of the classic world. At any rate, whatever may have been Raphael's intention, the legend of Antinous, that last creation of antique mythology, shines upon us in this marble, just as the tale of Hero and Leander, that last blossom of antique literature, flowers afresh in the verses of our Marlowe. It would appear as though the Renaissance poets, hastening to meet the classic world with arms of welcome, had embraced its latest saints, as nearest to them, in the rapture of their first enthusiasm.

Over all these questions, over all that concerns Antinous, there rests a cloud of darkness and impenetrable doubt. To pierce that cloud is now impossible. The utmost we can do is to indulge our fancy in dreams of greater or less probability, and to mark out clearly the limitations of the subject. It is indeed something to have shown that the stigma of slavery and disgrace attaching to his name has no solid historical justification, and something to have suggested plausible reasons

for conjecturing that his worship had a genuine spiritual basis. Yet the sincere critic, at the end of the whole inquiry, will confess that he has only cast a plummet into the unfathomable sea of ignorance. What remains, immortal, indestructible, victorious, is Antinous in art. Against the gloomy background of doubt, calumny, contention, terrible surmise, his statues are illuminated with the dying glory of the classic genius—even as the towers and domes of a marble city shine forth from the purple banks of a thunder-cloud in sunset light. Here and here only does reality emerge from the chaos of conflicting phantoms. Front to front with them, it is allowed us to forget all else but the beauty of one who died young because the gods loved him. But when we question those wonderful mute features and beg them for their secret, they return no answer. There is not even a smile upon the parted lips. So profound is the mystery, so insoluble the enigma, that from its most importunate interrogation we derive nothing but an attitude of deeper reverence. This in itself, however, is worth the pains of study.¹

¹ I must here express my indebtedness to my friend H. F. Brown for a large portion of the materials used by me in this essay on Antinous, which I had no means at Davos Platz of accumulating for myself, and which he unearthed from the libraries of Florence in the course of his own work, and generously placed at my disposal.

SPRING WANDERINGS

ANA-CAPRI

THE storm-clouds at this season, though it is the bloom of May, are daily piled in sulky or menacing masses over Vesuvius and the Abruzzi, frothing out their curls of moulded mist across the bay, and climbing the heavens with toppling castle towers and domes of alabaster.

We made the most of a tranquil afternoon, when there was an armistice of storm, to climb the bluff of Mount Solaro. A ruined fort caps that limestone bulwark; and there we lay together, drinking the influences of sea, sun, and wind. Immeasurably deep beneath us plunged the precipices, deep, deep descending to a bay where fisher boats were rocking, diminished to a scale that made the fishermen in them invisible. Low down above the waters wheeled white gulls, and higher up the hawks and ospreys of the cliff sailed out of sunlight into shadow. Immitigable strength is in the moulding of this limestone, and sharp, clear definiteness marks yon clothing of scant brushwood where the fearless goats are browsing. The sublime of sculpturesque in crag structure is here, refined and modulated by the sweetness of sea distances. For the air came pure and yielding to us over the unfooted sea; and at the basement of those fortress-cliffs the sea was dreaming in its caves; and far away, to east and south and west, soft light was blent with mist upon the surface of the shimmering waters.

The distinction between prospects viewed from a mountain overlooking a great plain, or viewed from heights that, like this, dominate the sea, principally lies in this: that while the former only offer cloud shadows cast upon the fields below our feet, in the latter these shadows are diversified with cloud reflections. This gives superiority in qualities of colour, variety of tone, and luminous effect to the sea, compensating in some measure for the lack of those associations which render the outlook over a wide extent of populated land so thrilling. The emergence of towered cities into sunlight at the skirts of moving shadows, the liquid lapse of rivers half disclosed by windings among woods, the upturned mirrors of unruffled lakes, are wanting to the sea. For such episodes the white sails of vessels, with all their wistfulness of going to and fro on the mysterious deep, are but a poor exchange. Yet the sea-lover may justify his preference by appealing to the beauty of empurpled shadows, toned by amethyst or opal, or shining with violet light, reflected from the clouds that cross and find in those dark shields a mirror. There are suggestions, too, of immensity, of liberty, of action, presented by the boundless horizons and the changeful changeless tracts of ocean which no plain possesses.

It was nigh upon sunset when we descended to Ana-Capri. That evening the clouds assembled suddenly. The armistice of storm was broken. They were terribly blue, and the sea grew dark as steel beneath them, till the moment when the sun's lip reached the last edge of the waters. Then a courier of rosy flame sent forth from him passed swift across the gulf, touching, where it trod, the waves with accidental fire. The messenger reached Naples; and in a moment, as by some diabolical illumination, the sinful city kindled into light like glowing charcoal. From Posilippo on the left, along the palaces of the Chiaja, up to S. Elmo on the hill, past Santa

Lucia, down on the Marinella, beyond Portici, beyond Torre del Greco, where Vesuvius towered up aloof, an angry mount of amethystine gloom, the conflagration spread and reached Pompeii, and dwelt on Torre dell' Annunziata. Stationary, lurid, it smouldered while the day died slowly. The long, densely populated sea-line from Pozzuoli to Castellammare burned and smoked with intensest incandescence, sending a glare of fiery mist against the threatening blue behind, and fringing with pomegranate-coloured blots the water where no light now lingered. It is difficult to bend words to the use required. The scene, in spite of natural suavity and grace, had become like Dante's first glimpse of the City of Dis—like Sodom and Gomorrah when fire from heaven descended on their towers before they crumbled into dust.

FROM CAPRI TO ISCHIA

After this, for several days, Libeccio blew harder. No boats could leave or come to Capri. From the piazza parapet we saw the wind scooping the surface of the waves, and flinging spray-fleeces in sheets upon the churning water. As they broke on Cape Campanella, the rollers climbed in foam—how many feet?—and blotted out the olive-trees above the headland. The sky was always dark with hanging clouds and masses of low-lying vapour, very moist, but scarcely raining—lightning without thunder in the night.

Such weather is unexpected in the middle month of May, especially when the olives are blackened by December storms, and the orange-trees despoiled of foliage, and the tendrils of the vines yellow with cold. The walnut-trees have shown no sign of making leaves. Only the figs seem to have suffered little.

It had been settled that we should start upon the first

seafaring dawn for Ischia or Sorrento, according as the wind might set; and I was glad when, early one morning, the captain of the *Serena* announced a moderate sirocco. When we reached the little quay we found the surf of the Libeccio still rolling heavily into the gulf. A gusty south-easter crossed it, tearing spray-crests from the swell as it went plunging onward. The sea was rough enough; but we made fast sailing, our captain steering with a skill which it was beautiful to watch, his five oarsmen picturesquely grouped beneath the straining sail. The sea slapped and broke from time to time on our windward quarter, drenching the boat with brine; and now and then her gunwale scooped into the shoulder of a wave as she shot sidling up it. Meanwhile enormous masses of leaden-coloured clouds formed above our heads and on the sea-line; but these were always shifting in the strife of winds, and the sun shone through them petulantly. As we climbed the rollers, or sank into their trough, the outline of the bay appeared in glimpses, shyly revealed, suddenly withdrawn from sight; the immobility and majesty of mountains contrasted with the weltering waste of water round us—now blue and garish where the sunlight fell, now shrouded in squally rain-storms, and then again sullen beneath a vaporous canopy. Each of these vignettes was photographed for one brief second on the brain, and swallowed by the hurling drift of billows. The painter's art could but ill have rendered that changeful colour in the sea, passing from tawny cloud-reflections and surfaces of glowing violet to bright blue or impenetrable purple flecked with boiling foam, according as a light-illuminated or a shadowed facet of the moving mass was turned to sight.

Halfway across the gulf the sirocco lulled; the sail was lowered, and we had to make the rest of the passage by rowing. Under the lee of Ischia we got into comparatively quiet

water; though here the beautiful Italian sea was yellowish green with churned-up sand, like an unripe orange. We passed the castle on its rocky island, with the domed church which has been so often painted in *gouache* pictures through the last two centuries, and soon after noon we came to Casamicciola.

LA PICCOLA SENTINELLA

Casamicciola is a village on the north side of the island, in its centre, where the visitors to the mineral baths of Ischia chiefly congregate. One of its old-established inns is called La Piccola Sentinella. The first sight on entrance is an open gallery, with a pink wall on which bloom magnificent cactuses, sprays of thick-clustering scarlet and magenta flowers. This is a rambling house, built in successive stages against a hill, with terraces and verandahs opening on unexpected gardens to the back and front. Beneath its long irregular façade there spreads a wilderness of orange-trees and honeysuckles and roses, verbenas, geraniums and mignonette, snapdragons, gazanias and stocks, exceeding bright and fragrant, with the green slopes of Monte Epomeo for a background and Vesuvius for far distance. There are wonderful bits of detail in this garden. One dark, thick-foliaged olive, I remember, leaning from the tufa over a lizard-haunted wall, feathered waist-high in huge acanthus leaves. The whole rich orchard ground of Casamicciola is dominated by Monte Epomeo, the extinct volcano which may be called the *raison d'être* of Ischia; for this island is nothing but a mountain lifted by the energy of fire from the sea-basement. Its fantastic peaks and ridges, sulphur-coloured, dusty grey, and tawny, with brushwood in young leaf upon the cloven flanks, form a singular pendant to the austere but more artistically modelled limestone crags of Capri. No two islands that I know, within so

short a space of sea, offer two pictures so different in style and quality of loveliness. The inhabitants are equally distinct in type. Here, in spite of what De Musset wrote somewhat affectedly about the peasant girls—

Ischia ! c'est là qu'on a des yeux,
C'est là qu'un corsage amoureux
Serre la hanche.
Sur un bas rouge bien tiré
Brille, sous le jupon doré,
La mule blanche—

in spite of these lines I did not find the Ischian women eminent, as those of Capri are, for beauty. But the young men have fine, loose, faun-like figures, and faces that would be strikingly handsome but for too long and prominent noses. They are a singular race, graceful in movement.

Evening is divine in Ischia. From the topmost garden terrace of the inn one looks across the sea towards Terracina, Gaeta, and those descending mountain buttresses, the Phlegrean plains, and the distant snows of the Abruzzi. Rain-washed and luminous, the sunset sky held Hesper trembling in a solid green of beryl. Fireflies flashed among the orange blossoms. Far away in the obscurity of eastern twilight glared the smouldering cone of Vesuvius—a crimson blot upon the darkness—a Cyclops' eye, bloodshot and menacing.

The company in the Piccola Sentinella, young and old, were decrepit, with an odd, rheumatic, shrivelled look upon them. The dining-room reminded me, as certain rooms are apt to do, of a ship's saloon. I felt as though I had got into the cabin of the *Flying Dutchman*, and that all these people had been sitting there at meat a hundred years, through storm and shine, for ever driving onward over immense waves in an enchanted calm.

ISCHIA AND FORIO

One morning we drove along the shore, up hill, and down, by the Porto d'Ischia to the town and castle. This country curiously combines the qualities of Corfu and Catania. The near distance, so richly cultivated, with the large volcanic slopes of Monte Epomeo rising from the sea, is like Catania. Then, across the gulf, are the bold outlines and snowy peaks of the Abruzzi, recalling Albanian ranges. Here, as in Sicily, the old lava is overgrown with prickly pear and red valerian. *Mesembrianthemums*—I must be pardoned this word; for I cannot omit those fleshy-leaved creepers, with their wealth of gaudy blossoms, shaped like sea anemones, coloured like strawberry and pineapple cream-ices—*mesembrianthemums*, then, tumble in torrents from the walls, and large-cupped white *convolvulus* curl about the hedges. The Castle Rock, with Capri's refined sky-coloured outline relieving its hard profile on the horizon, is one of those exceedingly picturesque objects just too theatrical to be artistic. It seems ready-made for a back scene in 'Masaniello,' and cries out to the chromolithographer, 'Come and make the most of me!' Yet this morning all things, in sea, earth, and sky, were so delicately tinted and bathed in pearly light that it was difficult to be critical.

In the afternoon we took the other side of the island, driving through Lacco to Forio. One gets right round the bulk of Epomeo, and looks up into a weird region called Le Falange, where white lava streams have poured in two broad irregular torrents among broken precipices. Forio itself is placed at the end of a flat headland, boldly thrust into the sea; and its furthest promontory bears a pilgrimage church, intensely white and glaring.

There is something arbitrary in the memories we make of places casually visited, dependent as they are upon our mood at the moment, or on an accidental interweaving of impressions which the *genius loci* blends for us. Of Forio two memories abide with me. The one is of a young woman, with very fair hair, in a light blue dress, standing beside an older woman in a garden. There was a flourishing pomegranate-tree above them. The whiteness and the dreamy smile of the young woman seemed strangely out of tune with her strong-toned southern surroundings. I could have fancied her a daughter of some moist north-western isle of Scandinavian seas. My other memory is of a lad, brown, handsome, powerfully featured, thoughtful, lying curled up in the sun upon a sort of ladder in his house-court, profoundly meditating. He had a book in his hand, and his finger still marked the place where he had read. He looked as though a Columbus or a Campanella might emerge from his earnest, fervent, steadfast adolescence. Driving rapidly along, and leaving Forio in all probability for ever, I kept wondering whether those two lives, discerned as though in vision, would meet—whether she was destined to be his evil genius, whether posterity would hear of him and journey to his birthplace in this world-neglected Forio. Such reveries are futile. Yet who entirely resists them?

MONTE EPOMEIO

About three on the morning which divides the month of May into two equal parts I woke and saw the waning moon right opposite my window, stayed in her descent upon the slope of Epomeo. Soon afterwards Christian called me, and we settled to ascend the mountain. Three horses and a stout black donkey, with their inevitable grooms, were ordered;

and we took for guide a lovely faun-like boy, goat-faced, goat-footed, with gentle manners and pliant limbs swaying beneath the breath of impulse. He was called Giuseppe.

The way leads past the mineral baths and then strikes uphill, at first through lanes cut deep in the black lava. The trees meet almost overhead. It is like Devonshire, except that one half hopes to see tropical foxgloves with violet bells and downy leaves sprouting among the lush grasses and sweet-scented ferns upon those gloomy, damp, warm walls. After this we skirted a thicket of arbutus, and came upon the long volcanic ridge, with divinest outlook over Procida and Miseno toward Vesuvius. Then once more we had to dive into brown sandstone gullies, extremely steep, where the horses almost burst their girths in scrambling, and the grooms screamed, exasperating their confusion with encouragements and curses. Straight or bending as a willow wand, Giuseppe kept in front. I could have imagined he had stepped to life from one of Lionardo's fancy-sprighted studies.

After this fashion we gained the spine of mountain which composes Ischia—the smooth ascending ridge that grows up from those eastern waves to what was once the apex of fire-vomiting Inarime, and breaks in precipices westward, a ruin of gulfed lava, tortured by the violence of pent Typhœus. Under a vast umbrella pine we dismounted, rested, and saw Capri. Now the road skirts slanting-wise along the further flank of Epomeo, rising by muddy earth-heaps and sandstone hollows to the quaint pinnacles which build the summit. There is no inconsiderable peril in riding over this broken ground; for the soil crumbles away, and the ravines open downward, treacherously masked with brushwood.

On Epomeo's topmost cone a chapel dedicated to S. Niccolo da Bari, the Italian patron of seamen, has been

hollowed from the rock. Attached to it is the dwelling of two hermits, subterranean, with long dark corridors and windows opening on the western seas. Church and hermitage alike are scooped, with slight expenditure of mason's skill, from solid mountain. The windows are but loopholes, leaning from which the town of Forio is seen, 2500 feet below; and the jagged precipices of the menacing Falange toss their contorted horror forth to sea and sky. Through gallery and grotto we wound in twilight under a monk's guidance, and came at length upon the face of the crags above Casamicciola. A few steps upward, cut like a ladder in the stone, brought us to the topmost peak—a slender spire of soft, yellowish tufa. It reminded me (with differences) of the way one climbs the spire at Strasburg, and stands upon that temple's final crocket, with nothing but a lightning conductor to steady swimming senses. Different indeed are the views unrolled beneath the peak of Epomeo and the pinnacle of Strasburg! Vesuvius, with the broken lines of Procida, Miseno, and Lago Fusaro for foreground; the sculpturesque beauty of Capri, buttressed in everlasting calm upon the waves; the Phlegræan plains and champaign of Volturno, stretching between smooth seas and shadowy hills; the mighty sweep of Naples' bay; all merged in blue; ærial, translucent, exquisitely frail. In this ethereal fabric of azure the most real of realities, the most solid of substances, seem films upon a crystal sphere.

The hermit produced some flasks of amber-coloured wine from his stores in the grotto. These we drank, lying full-length upon the tufa in the morning sunlight. The panorama of sea, sky, and long-drawn lines of coast, breathless, without a ripple or a taint of cloud, spread far and wide around us. Our horses and donkey cropped what little grass, blent with bitter herbage, grew on that barren summit. Their grooms

helped us out with the hermit's wine, and turned to sleep face downward. The whole scene was very quiet, islanded in immeasurable air. Then we asked the boy, Giuseppe, whether he could guide us on foot down the cliffs of Monte Epomeo to Casamicciola. This he was willing and able to do; for he told me that he had spent many months each year upon the hillside, tending goats. When rough weather came, he wrapped himself in a blanket from the snow that falls and melts upon the ledges. In summer time he basked the whole day long, and slept the calm ambrosial nights away. Something of this free life was in the burning eyes, long clustering dark hair, and smooth brown bosom of the faun-like creature. His graceful body had the brusque, unerring movement of the goats he shepherded. Human thought and emotion seemed a-slumber in this youth who had grown one with nature. As I watched his careless incarnate loveliness I remembered lines from an old Italian poem of romance, describing a dweller of the forest, who

Haunteth the woodland aye 'neath verdurous shade,
 Eateth wild fruit, drinketh of running stream;
 And such-like is his nature, as 'tis said,
 That ever weepeth he when clear skies gleam,
 Seeing of storms and rain he then hath dread,
 And feareth lest the sun's heat fail for him;
 But when on high hurl winds and clouds together,
 Full glad is he and waiteth for fair weather.

Giuseppe led us down those curious volcanic *balze*, where the soil is soft as marl, with tints splashed on it of pale green and rose and orange, and a faint scent in it of sulphur. They break away into wild chasms, where rivulets begin; and here the narrow watercourses made for us plain going. The turf beneath our feet was starred with cyclamens and wavering anemones. At last we reached the chestnut woods, and so

by winding paths descended on the village. Giuseppe told me, as we walked, that in a short time he would be obliged to join the army. He contemplated this duty with a dim and undefined dislike. Nor could I, too, help dreading and misliking it for him. The untamed, gentle creature, who knew so little but his goats as yet, whose nights had been passed from childhood *à la belle étoile*, whose limbs had never been cumbered with broadcloth or belt—for him to be shut up in the barrack of some Lombard city, packed in white conscript's sacking, drilled, taught to read and write, and weighted with the knapsack and the musket! There was something lamentable in the prospect. But such is the burden of man's life, of modern life especially. United Italy demands of her children that by this discipline they should be brought into that harmony which builds a nation out of diverse elements.

FROM ISCHIA TO NAPLES

Ischia showed a new aspect on the morning of our departure. A sea-mist passed along the skirts of the island, and rolled in heavy masses round the peaks of Monte Epomeo, slowly condensing into summer clouds, and softening each outline with a pearly haze, through which shone emerald glimpses of young vines and fig-trees.

We left in a boat with four oarsmen for Pozzuoli. For about an hour the breeze carried us well, while Ischia behind grew ever lovelier, soft as velvet, shaped like a gem. The mist had become a great white luminous cloud—not dense and alabastrine, like the clouds of thunder; but filmy, tender, comparable to the atmosphere of Dante's moon. Porpoises and sea-gulls played and fished about our bows, dividing the

dark brine in spray. The mountain distances were drowned in bluish vapour—Vesuvius quite invisible. About noon the air grew clearer, and Capri reared her fortalice of sculptured rock, aërially azure, into liquid ether. I know not what effect of atmosphere or light it is that lifts an island from the sea by interposing that thin edge of lustrous white between it and the water. But this phenomenon to-day was perfectly exhibited. Like a mirage on the wilderness, like Fata Morgana's palace ascending from the deep, the pure and noble vision stayed suspense 'twixt heaven and ocean. At the same time the breeze failed, and we rowed slowly between Procida and Capo Miseno—a space in old-world history athrong with Cæsar's navies. When we turned the point, and came in sight of Baiæ, the wind freshened and took us flying into Pozzuoli. The whole of this coast has been spoiled by the recent upheaval of Monte Nuovo with its lava floods and cindery deluges. Nothing remains to justify its fame among the ancient Romans and the Neapolitans of Boccaccio's and Pontano's age. It is quite wrecked, beyond the power even of hendecasyllables to bring again its breath of beauty :—

Mecum si sapiēs, Gravina, mecum
 Baias, et placidos coles recessus,
 Quos ipsæ et veneres colunt, et illa
 Quæ mentes hominum regit voluptas.
 Hic vina et choreæ jocique regnant,
 Regnant et charites facetiæque.
 Has sedes amor, has colit cupido.
 His passim juvenes puellulæque
 Ludunt, et tepidis aquis lavantur,
 Cœnantque et dapibus leporibusque
 Miscent delitias venustiores :
 Miscent gaudia et osculationes,
 Atque una sociis toris fœventur,
 Has te ad delitias vocant camœnæ ;
 Invitat mare, myrteumque littus ;

Invitant volucres canoræ, et ipse
Gaurus pampineas parat corollas.¹

At Pozzuoli we dined in the Albergo del Ponte di Caligola (Heaven save the mark!), and drank Falernian wine of modern and indifferent vintage. Then Christian hired two open carriages for Naples. He and I sat in the second. In the first we placed the two ladies of our party. They had a large, fat driver. Just after we had all passed the gate a big fellow rushed up, dragged the corpulent coachman from his box, pulled out a knife, and made a savage thrust at the man's stomach. At the same moment a *guardia-porta*, with drawn cutlass, interposed and struck between the combatants. They were separated. Their respective friends assembled in two jabbering crowds, and the whole party, uttering vociferous objurgations, marched off, as I imagined, to the watch-house. A very shabby lazzarone, without more ado,

¹ These verses are extracted from the second book of Pontano's *Hendecasyllabi* (Aldus, 1513, p. 208). They so vividly paint the amusements of a watering-place in the fifteenth century that I have translated them:—

With me, let but the mind be wise, Gravina,
With me haste to the tranquil haunts of Baiæ,
Haunts that pleasure hath made her home, and she who
Sways all hearts, the voluptuous Aphrodite.
Here wine rules, and the dance, and games and laughter;
Graces reign in a round of mirthful madness;
Love hath built, and desire, a palace here too,
Where glad youths and enamoured girls on all sides
Play and bathe in the waves in sunny weather,
Dine and sup, and the merry mirth of banquets
Blend with dearer delights and love's embraces,
Blend with pleasures of youth and honeyed kisses,
Till, sport-tired, in the couch inarmed they slumber.
Thee our Muses invite to these enjoyments;
Thee those billows allure, the myrtled seashore,
Birds allure with a song, and mighty Gaurus
Twines his redolent wreath of vines and ivy.

sprang on the empty box, and we made haste for Naples. Being only anxious to get there, and not at all curious about the squabble which had deprived us of our fat driver, I relapsed into indifference when I found that neither of the men to whose lot we had fallen was desirous of explaining the affair. It was sufficient cause for self-congratulation that no blood had been shed, and that the *Procuratore del Rè* would not require our evidence.

The Grotta di Posilippo was a sight of wonder, with the afternoon sun slanting on its festoons of creeping plants above the western entrance—the gas lamps, dust, huge carts, oxen, and *contadini* in its subterranean darkness—and then the sudden revelation of the bay and city as we jingled out into the summery air again by Virgil's tomb.

NIGHT AT POMPEII

On to Pompeii in the clear sunset, falling very lightly upon mountains, islands, little ports, and indentations of the bay.

From the railway station we walked above half a mile to the Albergo del Sole under a lucid heaven of aqua-marine colour, with Venus large in it upon the border line between the tints of green and blue.

The Albergo del Sole is worth commemorating. We stepped, without the intervention of courtyard or entrance hall, straight from the little inn garden into an open, vaulted room. This was divided into two compartments by a stout column supporting round arches. Wooden gates furnished a kind of fence between the atrium and what an old Pompeian would have styled the triclinium. For in the further part a table was laid for supper and lighted with suspended lamps. And here a party of artists and students drank and talked and

smoked. A great live peacock, half asleep and winking his eyes, sat perched upon a heavy wardrobe watching them. The outer chamber, where we waited in armchairs of ample girth, had its *loggia* windows and doors open to the air. There were singing-birds in cages; and plants of rosemary, iris, and arundo sprang carelessly from holes in the floor. A huge vase filled to overflowing with oranges and lemons, the very symbol of generous prodigality, stood in the midst, and several dogs were lounging round. The outer twilight, blending with the dim sheen of the lamps, softened this pretty scene to picturesqueness. Altogether it was a strange and unexpected place. Much experienced as the nineteenth-century nomad may be in inns, he will rarely receive a more powerful and refreshing impression, entering one at evenfall, than here.

There was no room for us in the inn. We were sent, attended by a boy with a lantern, through fields of dew-drenched barley and folded poppies, to a farmhouse overshadowed by four spreading pines. Exceedingly soft and grey, with rose-tinted veils of steam upon its summit, stood Vesuvius above us in the twilight. Something in the recent impression of the dimly lighted supper-room, and in the idyllic simplicity of this lantern-litten journey through the barley, suggested, by one of those inexplicable stirrings of association which affect tired senses, a dim, dreamy thought of Palestine and Bible stories. The feeling of the *cenacolo* blent here with feelings of Ruth's cornfields, and the white square houses with their flat roofs enforced the illusion. Here we slept in the middle of a *contadino* colony. Some of the folk had made way for us; and by the wheezing, coughing, and snoring of several sorts and ages in the chamber next me, I imagine they must have endured considerable crowding. My bed was large enough to have

contained a family. Over its head there was a little shrine, hollowed in the thickness of the wall, with several sacred emblems and a shallow vase of holy water. On dressers at each end of the room stood glass shrines, occupied by finely dressed Madonna dolls and pots of artificial flowers. Above the doors S. Michael and S. Francis, roughly embossed in low relief and boldly painted, gave dignity and grandeur to the walls. These showed some sense for art in the first builders of the house. But the taste of the inhabitants could not be praised. There were countless gaudy prints of saints, and exactly five pictures of the Bambino, very big, and sprawling in a field alone. A crucifix, some old bottles, a gun, old clothes suspended from pegs, pieces of peasant pottery and china, completed the furniture of the apartment.

But what a view it showed when Christian next morning opened the door! From my bed I looked across the red-tiled terrace to the stone-pines with their velvet roofage and the blue-peaked hills of Stabiae.

SAN GERMANO

No one need doubt about his quarters in this country town. The Albergo di Pompeii is a truly sumptuous place. Sofas, tables, and chairs in our sitting-room are made of buffalo horns, very cleverly pieced together, but torturing the senses with suggestions of impalement. Sitting or standing, one felt insecure. When would the points run into us? when should we begin to break these incrustations off? and would the whole fabric crumble at a touch into chaotic heaps of horns?

It is market day, and the costumes in the streets are brilliant. The women wear a white petticoat, a blue skirt made straight and tightly bound above it, a white richly

worked bodice, and the white square-folded napkin of the Abruzzi on their heads. Their jacket is of red or green—pure colour. A rug of striped red, blue, yellow, and black protects the whole dress from the rain. There is a very noble quality of green—sappy and gemmy—like some of Titian's or Giorgione's—in the stuffs they use. Their build and carriage are worthy of goddesses.

Rain falls heavily, persistently. We must ride on donkeys, in waterproofs, to Monte Cassino. Mountain and valley, oak wood and ilex grove, lentisk thicket and winding river-bed, are drowned alike in soft-descending, soaking rain. Far and near the landscape swims in rain, and the hillsides send down torrents through their watercourses.

The monastery is a square, dignified building, of vast extent and princely solidity. It has a fine inner court, with sumptuous staircases of slabbed stone leading to the church. This public portion of the edifice is both impressive and magnificent, without sacrifice of religious severity to parade. We acknowledge a successful compromise between the austerity of the order and the grandeur befitting the fame, wealth, prestige, and power of its parent foundation. The church itself is a tolerable structure of the Renaissance—costly marble incrustations and mosaics, meaningless Neapolitan frescoes. One singular episode in the mediocrity of art adorning it, is the tomb of Pietro de' Medici. Expelled from Florence in 1494, he never returned, but was drowned in the Garigliano. Clement VII. ordered, and Duke Cosimo I. erected, this marble monument—the handicraft, in part at least, of Francesco di San Gallo—to their relative. It is singularly stiff, ugly, out of place—at once obtrusive and insignificant.

A gentle old German monk conducted Christian and me over the convent—boys' school, refectory, printing press,

lithographic workshop, library, archives. We then returned to the church, from which we passed to visit the most venerable and sacred portion of the monastery. The cell of S. Benedict is being restored and painted in fresco by the Austrian Benedictines; a pious but somewhat frigid process of re-edification. This so-called cell is a many-chambered and very ancient building, with a tower which is now embedded in the massive superstructure of the modern monastery. The German artists adorning it contrive to blend the styles of Giotto, Fra Angelico, Egypt, and Byzance, not without force and a kind of intense frozen pietism. S. Mauro's vision of his master's translation to heaven—the ladder of light issuing between two cypresses, and the angels watching on the tower walls—might even be styled poetical. But the decorative angels on the roof and other places, being adapted from Egyptian art, have a strange, incongruous appearance.

Monasteries are almost invariably disappointing to one who goes in search of what gives virtue and solidity to human life; and even Monte Cassino was no exception. This ought not to be otherwise, seeing what a peculiar sympathy with the monastic institution is required to make these cloisters comprehensible. The atmosphere of operose indolence, prolonged through centuries and centuries, stifles; nor can antiquity and influence impose upon a mind which resents monkery itself as an essential evil. That Monte Cassino supplied the Church with several potentates is incontestable. That mediæval learning and morality would have suffered more without this brotherhood cannot be doubted. Yet it is difficult to name men of very eminent genius whom the Cassinesi claim as their alumni; nor, with Boccaccio's testimony to their carelessness, and with the evidence of their library before our eyes, can we rate their services to

civilised erudition very highly. I longed to possess the spirit, for one moment, of Montalembert. I longed for what is called historical imagination, for the indiscriminate voracity of those men to whom world-famous sites are in themselves soul-stirring.

AMALFI, PÆSTUM, CAPRI

THE road between Vietri and Amalfi is justly celebrated as one of the most lovely pieces of coast scenery in Italy. Its only rivals are the roads from Castellammare to Sorrento, from Genoa to Sestri, and from Nice to Mentone. Each of these has its own charm; and yet their similarity is sufficient to invite comparison: under the spell of each in turn, we are inclined to say, This then, at all events, is the most beautiful. On first quitting Vietri, Salerno is left low down upon the sea-shore, nestling into a little corner of the bay which bears its name, and backed up by gigantic mountains. With each onward step these mountain-ranges expand in long aerial line, revealing reaches of fantastic peaks, that stretch away beyond the plain of Pæstum, till they end at last in mist and sunbeams shimmering on the sea. On the left hand hangs the cliff above the deep salt water, with here and there a fig-tree spreading fanlike leaves against the blue beneath. On the right rises the hillside, clothed with myrtle, lentisk, cistus, and pale yellow coronilla—a tangle as sweet with scent as it is gay with blossom. Over the parapet that skirts the precipice lean heavy-foliaged locust-trees, and the terraces in sunny nooks are set with lemon-orchards. There are but few olives, and no pines. Meanwhile each turn in the road brings some change of scene—now a village with its little beach of grey sand, lapped by clearest sea-waves, where bare-legged fishermen mend their nets, and naked boys bask like lizards in the

sun—now towering bastions of weird rock, broken into spires and pinnacles like those of Skye, and coloured with bright hues of red and orange—then a ravine, where the thin thread of a mountain streamlet seems to hang suspended upon ferny ledges in the limestone—or a precipice defined in profile against sea and sky, with a lad, half dressed in goat-skin, dangling his legs into vacuity and singing—or a tract of cultivation, where the orange, apricot, and lemon trees nestle together upon terraces with intermingled pergolas of vines.

Amalfi and Atrani lie close together in two of these ravines, the mountains almost arching over them, and the sea washing their very house-walls. Each has its crowning campanile; but that of Amalfi is the stranger of the two, like a Moorish tower at the top, and coloured with green and yellow tiles that glitter in the sunlight. The houses are all dazzling white, plastered against the naked rock, rising on each other's shoulders to get a glimpse of earth and heaven, jutting out on coigns of vantage from the toppling cliff, and pierced with staircases as dark as night at noonday. Some frequented lanes lead through the basements of these houses; and as the donkeys pick their way from step to step in the twilight, bare-chested macaroni-makers crowd forth like ants to see us strangers pass. A myriad of swallows or a swarm of mason bees might build a town like this.

It is not easy to imagine the time when Amalfi and Atrani were one town, with docks and arsenals and harbourage for their associated fleets, and when these little communities were second in importance to no naval power of Christian Europe. The Byzantine Empire lost its hold on Italy during the eighth century; and after this time the history of Calabria is mainly concerned with the republics of Naples and Amalfi, their conflict with the Lombard dukes of Benevento, their opposition to the Saracens, and their final subjugation by the

Norman conquerors of Sicily. Between the year 839 A.D., when Amalfi freed itself from the control of Naples and the yoke of Benevento, and the year 1131, when Roger of Hauteville incorporated the republic in his kingdom of the Two Sicilies, this city was the foremost naval and commercial port of Italy. The burghers of Amalfi elected their own doge; founded the Hospital of Jerusalem, whence sprang the knightly order of S. John; gave their name to the richest quarter in Palermo; and owned trading establishments or factories in all the chief cities of the Levant. Their gold coinage of *tari* formed the standard of currency before the Florentines had stamped the lily and S. John upon the Tuscan florin. Their shipping regulations supplied Europe with a code of maritime laws. Their scholars, in the darkest depth of the dark ages, prized and conned a famous copy of the Pandects of Justinian; and their seamen deserved the fame of having first used, if they did not actually invent, the compass.

To modern visitors those glorious centuries of Amalfitan power and independence cannot but seem fabulous; so difficult is it for us to imagine the conditions of society in Europe when a tiny city, shut in between barren mountains and a tideless sea, without a circumjacent territory, and with no resources but piracy or trade, could develop maritime supremacy in the Levant and produce the first fine flowers of liberty and culture.

If the history of Amalfi's early splendour reads like a brilliant legend, the story of its premature extinction has the interest of a tragedy. The republic had grown and flourished on the decay of the Greek Empire. When the hard-handed race of Hauteville absorbed the heritage of Greeks and Lombards and Saracens in Southern Italy, these adventurers succeeded in annexing Amalfi. But it was not their interest to extinguish the state. On the contrary, they relied for

assistance upon the navies and the armies of the little commonwealth. New powers had meanwhile arisen in the North of Italy, who were jealous of rivalry upon the open seas; and when the Neapolitans resisted King Roger in 1135, they called Pisa to their aid, and sent her fleet to destroy Amalfi. The ships of Amalfi were on guard with Roger's navy in the Bay of Naples. The armed citizens were, under Roger's orders, at Aversa. Meanwhile the home of the republic lay defenceless on its mountain-girdled seaboard. The Pisans sailed into the harbour, sacked the city, and carried off the famous Pandects of Justinian as a trophy. Two years later they returned, to complete the work of devastation. Amalfi never recovered from the injuries and the humiliation of these two attacks. It was ever thus that the Italians, like the children of the dragon's teeth which Cadmus sowed, consumed each other. Pisa cut the throat of her sister-port Amalfi, and Genoa gave a mortal wound to Pisa, when the waters of Meloria were dyed with blood in 1284. Venice fought a duel to the death with Genoa in the succeeding century; and what Venice failed to accomplish was completed by Milan and the lords of the Visconti dynasty, who crippled and enslaved the haughty queen of the Ligurian Riviera.

The naval and commercial prosperity of Amalfi was thus put an end to by the Pisans in the twelfth century. But it was not then that the town assumed its present aspect. What surprises the student of history more than anything is the total absence of fortifications, docks, arsenals, and breakwaters, bearing witness to the ancient grandeur of a city which numbered 50,000 inhabitants, and traded with Alexandria, Syria, and the far East. Nothing of the sort, with the exception of a single solitary tower upon the Monte Aureo, is visible. Nor will he fail to remember that Amalfi and

Atrani, which are now divided by a jutting mountain buttress, were once joined by a tract of sea-beach, where the galleys of the republic rested after sweeping the Levant, and where the fishermen drew up their boats upon the smooth grey sand. That also has disappeared. The violence of man was not enough to reduce Amalfi to its present state of insignificance. The forces of nature aided—partly by the gradual subsidence of the land, which caused the lower quarters of the city to be submerged, and separated Amalfi from her twin-port by covering the beach with water—partly by a fearful tempest, accompanied by earthquake, in 1343. Petrarch, then resident at Naples, witnessed the destructive fury of this great convulsion, and the description he wrote of it soon after its occurrence is so graphic that some notice may well be taken of it here.

His letter, addressed to the noble Roman, Giovanni Colonna, begins with a promise to tell something of a storm which deserved the title of 'poetic,' and in a degree so superlative that no epithet but 'Homeric' would suffice to do it justice. This exordium is singularly characteristic of Petrarch, who never forgot that he was a literary man, and lost no opportunity of dragging the great names of antiquity into his rhetorical compositions. The catastrophe was hardly unexpected; for it had been prophesied by an astrological bishop, whom Petrarch does not name, that Naples would be overwhelmed by a terrible disaster in December 1343. The people were therefore in a state of wild anxiety, repenting of their sins, planning a total change of life under the fear of imminent death, and neglecting their ordinary occupations. On the day of the predicted calamity women roamed in trembling crowds through the streets, pressing their babies to their breasts, and besieging the altars of the saints with prayers. Petrarch, who shared the general disquietude, kept

watching the signs of the weather ; but nothing happened to warrant an extraordinary panic. At sunset the sky was quieter than usual ; and he could discern none of the symptoms of approaching tempest, to which his familiarity with the mountains of Vaucluse accustomed him. After dusk he stationed himself at a window to observe the moon until she went down, before midnight, obscured by clouds. Then he betook himself to bed ; but scarcely had he fallen into his first sleep when a most horrible noise aroused him. The whole house shook ; the night-light on his table was extinguished ; and he was thrown with violence from his couch. He was lodging in a convent ; and soon after this first intimation of the tempest he heard the monks calling to each other through the darkness. From cell to cell they hurried, the ghastly gleams of lightning falling on their terror-stricken faces. Headed by the Prior, and holding crosses and relics of the saints in their hands, they now assembled in Petrarch's chamber. Thence they proceeded in a body to the chapel, where they spent the night in prayer and expectation of impending ruin. It would be impossible, says the poet, to relate the terrors of that hellish night—the deluges of rain, the screaming of the wind, the earthquake, the thunder, the howling of the sea, and the shrieks of agonising human beings. All these horrors were prolonged, as though by some magician's spell, for what seemed twice the duration of a natural night. It was so dark that at last by conjecture rather than the testimony of their senses they knew that day had broken. A hurried mass was said. Then, as the noise in the town above them began to diminish, and a confused clamour from the sea-shore continually increased, their suspense became unendurable. They mounted their horses, and descended to the port—to see and perish. A fearful spectacle awaited them. The ships in the harbour had broken their moorings, and

were crashing helplessly together. The strand was strewn with mutilated corpses. The breakwaters were submerged, and the sea seemed gaining momentarily upon the solid land. A thousand watery mountains surged up into the sky between the shore and Capri; and these massive billows were not black or purple, but hoary with a livid foam. After describing some picturesque episodes—such as the gathering of the knights of Naples to watch the ruin of their city, the procession of court ladies headed by the queen to implore the intercession of Mary, and the wreck of a vessel freighted with 400 convicts bound for Sicily—Petrarch concludes with a fervent prayer that he may never have to tempt the sea, of whose fury he had seen so awful an example.

The capital on this occasion escaped the ruin prophesied. But Amalfi was inundated; and what the waters then gained has never been restored to man. This is why the once so famous city ranks now upon a level with quiet little towns whose names are hardly heard in history—with San Remo, or Rapallo, or Chiavari—and 'yet it is still as full of life as a wasp's nest, especially upon the molo, or raised piazza paved with bricks, in front of the Albergo de' Cappuccini. The changes of scene upon this tiny square are so frequent as to remind one of a theatre. Looking down from the inn-balcony, between the glazy green pots gay with scarlet amaryllis-bloom, we are inclined to fancy that the whole has been prepared for our amusement. In the morning the corn for the macaroni-flour, after being washed, is spread out on the bricks to dry. In the afternoon the fishermen bring their nets for the same purpose. In the evening the city magnates promenade and whisper. Dark-eyed women, with orange or crimson kerchiefs for headgear, cross and re-cross, bearing baskets on their shoulders. Great lazy large-limbed fellows, girt with scarlet sashes and finished off with dark blue

nightcaps (for a contrast to their saffron-coloured shirts, white breeches, and sunburnt calves), slouch about or sleep face downwards on the parapets. On either side of this same molo stretches a miniature beach of sand and pebble, covered with nets, which the fishermen are always mending, and where the big boats lade or unlade, trimming for the sardine fishery, or driving in to shore with a whirr of oars and a jabber of discordant voices. As the land-wind freshens, you may watch them set off one by one, like pigeons taking flight, till the sea is flecked with twenty sail, all scudding in the same direction. The torrent runs beneath the molo, and finds the sea beyond it; so that here too are the washer-women, chattering like sparrows; and everywhere the naked boys, like brown sea-urchins, burrow in the clean warm sand, or splash the shallow brine. If you like the fun, you may get a score of them to dive together and scramble for coppers in the deeper places, their lithe bodies gleaming wan beneath the water in a maze of interlacing arms and legs.

Over the whole busy scene rise the grey hills, soaring into blueness of air-distance, turreted here and there with ruined castles, capped with particoloured campanili and white convents, and tufted through their whole height with the orange and the emerald of the great tree-spurge, and with the live gold of the blossoming broom. It is difficult to say when this picture is most beautiful—whether in the early morning, when the boats are coming back from their night-toil upon the sea, and along the headlands in the fresh light lie swathes of fleecy mist, betokening a still, hot day—or at noontide, when the houses on the hill stand, tinted pink and yellow, shadowless like gems, and the great caruba-trees above the tangles of vines and figs are blots upon the steady glare—or at sunset, when violet and rose, reflected from the eastern sky, make all these terraces and peaks translucent

with a wondrous glow. The best of all, perhaps, is night, with a full moon hanging high overhead. Who shall describe the silhouettes of boats upon the shore or sleeping on the misty sea? On the horizon lies a dusky film of brownish golden haze, between the moon and the glimmering water; and here and there a lamp or candle burns with a deep red. Then is the time to take a boat and row upon the bay, or better, to swim out into the waves and trouble the reflections from the steady stars. The mountains, clear and calm, with light-irradiated chasms and hard shadows cast upon the rock, soar up above a city built of alabaster, or sea-foam, or summer clouds. The whole is white and wonderful: no similes suggest an analogue for the lustre, solid and transparent, of Amalfi nestling in moonlight between the grey-blue sea and lucid hills. Stars stand on all the peaks, and twinkle, or keep gliding, as the boat moves, down the craggy sides. Stars are mirrored on the marble of the sea, until one knows not whether the oar has struck sparks from a star image or has scattered diamonds of phosphorescent brine.

All this reads like a rhapsody; but indeed it is difficult not to be rhapsodical when a May night of Amalfi is in the memory, with the echo of rich baritone voices chanting Neapolitan songs to a mandoline. It is fashionable to complain that these Italian airs are opera-tunes; but this is only another way of saying that the Italian opera is the genuine outgrowth of national melody, and that Weber was not the first, as some German critics have supposed, to string together Volkslieder for the stage. Northerners, who have never seen or felt the beauty of the South, talk sad nonsense about the superiority of German over Italian music. It is true that much Italian music is out of place in Northern Europe, where we seem to need more travail of the intellect in art. But the Italians are rightly satisfied with such facile melody

and such simple rhythms as harmonise with sea and sky and boon earth sensuously beautiful. 'Perchè pensa? Pensando s' invecchia,' expresses the same habit of mind as another celebrated saying, 'La musica è il lamento dell' amore o la preghiera agli Dei.' Whatever may be the value of Italian music, it is in concord with such a scene as Amalfi by moonlight; and he who does not appreciate this no less than some more artificial combination of sights and sounds in Wagner's theatre at Bayreuth, has scarcely learned the first lesson in the lore of beauty.

There is enough and to spare for all tastes at Amalfi. The student of architecture may spend hours in the Cathedral, pondering over its high-built western front, and wondering whether there is more of Moorish or of Gothic in its delicate arcades. The painter may transfer its campanile, glittering like dragon's scales, to his canvas. The lover of the picturesque will wander through its aisle at mass-time, watching the sunlight play upon those upturned Southern faces with their ardent eyes; and happy is he who sees young men and maidens on Whit Sunday crowding round the chancel rails, to catch the marigolds and gillyflowers scattered from baskets which the priest has blessed. Is this a symbol of the Holy Spirit's gifts, or is it some quaint relic of Pagan *sparsiones*? This question, with the memory of Pompeian *graffiti* in our mind, may well suggest itself in Southern Italy, where old and new faiths are so singularly blended. Then there is Ravello on the hills above. The path winds upward between stone walls tufted with maidenhair; and ever nearer grow the mountains, and the sea-line soars into the sky. An Englishman has made his home here in a ruined Moorish villa, with cool colonnaded cloisters and rose-embowered terraces, lending far prospect over rocky hills and olive-girdled villages to Pæstum's plain. The churches of Ravello have

rare mosaics, and bronze doors, and marble pulpits, older perhaps than those of Tuscany, which tempt the archæologist to ask if Nicholas the Pisan learned his secret here. But who cares to be a sober antiquary at Amalfi? Far pleasanter is it to climb the staircase to the Capuchins, and linger in those caverns of the living rock, and pluck the lemons hanging by the mossy walls; or to row from cove to cove along the shore, watching the fishes swimming in the deeps beneath, and the medusas spreading their filmy bells; to land upon smooth slabs of rock, where corallines wave to and fro; or to rest on samphire-tufted ledges, when the shadows slant beneath the westering sun.

There is no point in all this landscape which does not make a picture. Painters might even complain that the pictures are too easy and the poetry too facile, just as the musicians find the melodies of this fair land too simple. No effect, carefully sought and strenuously seized, could enhance the mere beauty of Amalfi bathed in sunlight. You have only on some average summer day to sit down and paint the scene. Little scope is afforded for suggestions of far-away weird thoughts, or for elaborately studied motives. Daubigny and Corot are as alien here as Blake or Dürer.

What is wanted, and what no modern artist can successfully recapture from the wasteful past, is the mythopœic sense—the apprehension of primeval powers akin to man, growing into shape and substance on the borderland between the world and the keen human sympathies it stirs in us. Greek mythology was the proper form of art for scenery like this. It gave the final touch to all its beauties, and added to its sensuous charm an inbreathed spiritual life. No exercise of the poetic faculty, far less that metaphysical mood of the reflective consciousness which ‘leads from nature up to nature’s God,’ can now supply this need. From sea and earth

and sky, in those creative ages when the world was young, there leaned to greet the men whose fancy made them, forms imagined and yet real—human, divine—the archetypes and everlasting patterns of man's deepest sense of what is wonderful in nature. Feeling them there, for ever there, inalienable, ready to start forth and greet successive generations—as the Hamadryad greeted Rhaicos from his father's oak—those mythopoeists called them by immortal names. All their pent-up longings, all passions that consume, all aspirations that inflame—the desire for the impossible, which is disease, the day-dreams and visions of the night, which are spontaneous poems—were thus transferred to nature. And nature, responsive to the soul that loves her, gave them back transfigured and translated into radiant beings of like substance with mankind. It was thus, we feel, upon these southern shores that the gods of Greece came into being. The statues in the temples were the true fine flower of all this beauty, the culmination of the poetry which it evoked in hearts that feel and brains that think.

In Italy, far more than in any other part of Europe, the life of the present is imposed upon the strata of successive past lives. Greek, Latin, Moorish, and mediæval civilisations have arisen, flourished, and decayed on nearly the same soil; and it is common enough to find one city, which may have perished twenty centuries ago, neighbour to another that enjoyed its brief prosperity in the middle of our era. There is not, for example, the least sign of either Greek or Roman at Amalfi. Whatever may have been the glories of the republic in the early middle ages, they had no relation to the classic past. Yet a few miles off along the bay rise the ancient Greek temples of Pæstum, from a desert—with no trace of any intervening occupants. Poseidonia was founded in the sixth century before Christ, by colonists from Sybaris.

Three centuries later the Hellenic element in this settlement, which must already have become a town of no little importance, was submerged by a deluge of recurrent barbarism. Under the Roman rule it changed its name to Pæstum, and was prosperous. The Saracens destroyed it in the ninth century of our era; and Robert Guiscard carried some of the materials of its buildings to adorn his new town of Salerno. Since then the ancient site has been abandoned to malaria and solitude. The very existence of Pæstum was unknown, except to wandering herdsmen and fishers coasting near its ruined colonnades, until the end of the last century. Yet, strange to relate, after all these revolutions, and in the midst of this total desolation, the only relics of the antique city are three Greek temples, those very temples where the Hellenes, barbarised by their Lucanian neighbours, met to mourn for their lost liberty. It is almost impossible to trace more than the mere circuit of the walls of Poseidonia. Its port, if port it had in Roman days, has disappeared. Its theatre is only just discernible. Still not a column of the great hypæthral temple, built by the Sybarite colonists two thousand and five hundred years ago, to be a house for Zeus or for Poseidon, has been injured. The accidents that erased far greater cities, like Syracuse, from the surface of the earth—pillage, earthquake, the fury of fanatics, the slow decay of perishable stone, or the lust of palace builders in the middle ages—have spared those three houses of the gods, over whom, in the days of Alexander, the funeral hymn was chanted by the enslaved Hellenes.

‘We do the same,’ said Aristoxenus in his *Convivial Miscellanies*, ‘as the men of Poseidonia, who dwell on the Tyrrhenian Gulf. It befell them, having been at first true Hellenes, to be utterly barbarised, changing to Tyrrhenes or Romans, and altering their language, together with their

other customs. Yet they still observe one Hellenic festival, when they meet together and call to remembrance their old names and bygone institutions; and having lamented one to the other, and shed bitter tears, they afterwards depart to their own homes. Even thus a few of us also, now that our theatres have been barbarised, and this art of music has gone to ruin and vulgarity, meet together and remember what once music was.' ¹

This passage has a strange pathos, considering how it was penned, and how it has come down to us, tossed by the dark indifferent stream of time. The Aristoxenus who wrote it was a pupil of the Peripatetic School, born at Tarentum, and therefore familiar with the vicissitudes of Magna Græcia. The study of music was his chief preoccupation; and he used this episode in the agony of an enslaved Greek city, to point his own conservative disgust for innovations in an art of which we have no knowledge left. The works of Aristoxenus have perished, and the fragment I have quoted is embedded in the gossip of Egyptian Athenæus. In this careless fashion has been opened for us, as it were, a little window on a grief now buried in the oblivion of a hundred generations. After reading his words one May morning, beneath the pediment of Pæstum's noblest ruin, I could not refrain from thinking that if the spirits of those captive Hellenes were to revisit their old habitations, they would change their note of wailing into a thin ghostly pæan, when they found that Romans and Lucanians had passed away, that Christians and Saracens had left alike no trace behind, while the houses of their own ἀντὶ γαίης θεοὶ—dawn-facing deities—were still abiding in the pride of immemorial strength. Who knows whether buffalo-driver or bandit may not ere now have seen processions of these Poseidonian phantoms, bearing laurels and chaunting hymns on

¹ *Athenæus*, xiv. 632.

the spot where once they fell each on the other's neck to weep? Gathering his cloak around him and cowering closer to his fire of sticks, the night-watcher in those empty colonnades may have mistaken the Hellenic outlines of his shadowy visitants for fevered dreams, and the melody of their evanished music for the whistling of night winds or the cry of owls. So abandoned is Pæstum in its solitude that we know not even what legends may have sprung up round those relics of a mightier age.

The shrine is ruined now; and far away
To east and west stretch olive groves, whose shade
Even at the height of summer noon is grey.

Asphodels sprout upon the plinth decayed
Of these low columns, and the snake hath found
Her haunt 'neath altar-steps with weeds o'erlaid.

Yet this was once a hero's temple, crowned
With myrtle-boughs by lovers, and with palm
By wrestlers, resonant with sweetest sound

Of flute and fife in summer evening's calm,
And odorous with incense all the year,
With nard and spice, and galbanum and balm.

These lines sufficiently express the sense of desolation felt at Pæstum, except that the scenery is more solemn and mournful, and the temples are too august to be the shrine of any simple hero. There are no olives. The sea plunges on its sandy shore within the space of half a mile to westward. Far and wide on either hand stretch dreary fever-stricken marshes. The plain is bounded to the north, and east, and south, with mountains, purple, snow-peaked, serrated, and grandly broken like the hills of Greece. Driving over this vast level where the Silarus stagnates, the monotony of the landscape is broken now and then by a group of buffaloes

standing up to their dewlaps in reeds, by peasants on horse-back, with goads in their hands, and muskets slung athwart their backs, or by patrols of Italian soldiers crossing and re-crossing on the brigand-haunted roads. Certain portions have been reclaimed from the swamp, and here may be seen white oxen in herds of fifty grazing; or gangs of women at field-labour, with a man to oversee them, cracking a long hunting-whip; or the mares and foals of a famous stud-farm browsing under spreading pines. There are no villages, and the few farmhouses are so widely scattered as to make us wonder where the herdsmen and field-workers, scanty as they are, can possibly be lodged.

At last the three great temples come in sight. The rich orange of the central building contrasts with the paler yellow of its two companions, while the glowing colour of all three is splendidly relieved against green vegetation and blue mountain-flanks. Their material is travertine—a calcareous stone formed by the deposit of petrifying waters, which contains fragments of reeds, spiral shells, and other substances, embedded in the porous limestone. In the flourishing period of old Poseidonia these travertine columns were coated with stucco, worked to a smooth surface, and brilliantly tinted to harmonise with the gay costumes of a Greek festival. Even now this coating of fine sand, mingled with slaked lime and water, can be seen in patches on the huge blocks of the masonry. Thus treated, the travertine lacked little of the radiance of marble, for it must be remembered that the Greeks painted even the Pentelic cornice of the Parthenon with red and blue. Nor can we doubt that the general effect of brightness suited the glad and genial conditions of Greek life.

All the surroundings are altered now, and the lover of the picturesque may be truly thankful that the hand of time, by

stripping the buildings of this stucco, without impairing their proportions, has substituted a new harmony of tone between the native stone and the surrounding landscape, no less sympathetic to the present solitude than the old symphony of colours was to the animated circumstances of a populous Greek city. In this way those critics who defend the polychrome decorations of the classic architects, and those who contend that they cannot imagine any alteration from the present toning of Greek temples for the better, are both right.

In point of colour the Pæstum ruins are very similar to those of Girgenti; but owing to their position on a level plain, in front of a scarcely indented sea-shore, we lack the irregularity which adds so much charm to the row of temples on their broken cliff in the old town of Agrigentum. In like manner the celebrated *asymmetreia* of the buildings of the Athenian Acropolis, which causes so much variety of light and shade upon the temple-fronts, and offers so many novel points of view when they are seen in combination, seems to have been due originally to the exigencies of the ground. At Pæstum, in planning out the city, there can have been no utilitarian reasons for placing the temples at odd angles, either to each other or the shore. Therefore we see them now almost exactly in line and parallel, though at unequal distances. If something of picturesque effect is thus lost at Pæstum through the flatness of the ground, something of impressive grandeur on the other hand is gained by the very regularity with which those phalanxes of massive Doric columns are drawn up to face the sea.

Poseidonia, as the name betokens, was dedicated to the god of the sea; and the coins of the city are stamped with his effigy bearing a trident, and with his sacred animal, the bull. It has therefore been conjectured that the central of the three temples—which was hypæthral and had two entrances,

east and west—belonged to Poseidon ; and there is something fine in the notion of the god being thus able to pass to and fro from his cella through those sunny peristyles, down to his chariot, yoked with sea-horses, in the brine. Yet hypæthral temples were generally consecrated to Zeus, and it is therefore probable that the traditional name of this vast edifice is wrong. The names of the two other temples, *Tempio di Cerere* and *Basilica*, are wholly unsupported by any proof or probability. The second is almost certainly founded on a mistake ; and if we assign the largest of the three shrines to Zeus, one or other of the lesser belonged most likely to Poseidon.

The style of the temples is severe and primitive. In general effect their Doric architecture is far sterner than that adapted by Ictinus to the Parthenon. The entablature seems somewhat disproportioned to the columns and the pediment ; and, owing to this cause, there is a general effect of heaviness. The columns, again, are thick-set ; nor is the effect of solidity removed by their gradual narrowing from the base upwards. The pillars of the *Neptune* are narrowed in a straight line ; those of the *Basilica* and *Ceres* by a gentle curve. Study of these buildings, so sublime in their massiveness, so noble in the parsimony of their decoration, so dignified in their employment of the simplest means for the attainment of an indestructible effect of harmony, heightens our admiration for the Attic genius which found in this grand manner of the elder Doric architects resources as yet undeveloped ; creating, by slight and subtle alterations of outline, proportion, and rhythm of parts, what may fairly be classed as a style unique, because exemplified in only one transcendent building.

It is difficult not to return again and again to the beauty of colouring at Pæstum. Lying basking in the sun upon a flat slab of stone, and gazing eastward, we overlook a foreground of dappled light and shadow, across which the lizards run—

quick streaks of living emerald—making the bunches of yellow rue and little white serpyllum in the fissures of the masonry nod as they hurry past. Then come two stationary columns, built, it seems, of solid gold, where the sunbeams strike along their russet surface. Between them lies the landscape, a medley first of brakefern and asphodel and feathering acanthus and blue spikes of bugloss; then a white farm in the middle distance, roofed with the reddest tiles and sheltered by a velvety umbrella pine. Beyond and above the farm, a glimpse of mountains purple almost to indigo with cloud shadows, and flecked with snow. Still higher—but for this we have to raise our head a little—the free heavens enclosed within the framework of the tawny travertine, across which sail hawks and flutter jackdaws, sharply cut against the solid sky. Down from the architrave, to make the vignette perfect, hang tufts of crimson snapdragons. Each opening in the peristyle gives a fresh picture.

The temples are overgrown with snapdragons and mallows, yellow asters and lilac gillyflowers, white allium and wild fig. When a breeze passes, the whole of this many-coloured tapestry waves gently to and fro. The fields around are flowery enough; but where are the roses? I suppose no one who has read his Virgil at school, crosses the plain from Salerno to Pæstum without those words of the ‘Georgics’ ringing in his ears: *biferique rosaria Pæsti*. They have that wonderful Virgilian charm which, by a touch, transforms mere daily sights and sounds, and adds poetic mystery to common things. The poets of ancient Rome seem to have felt the magic of this phrase; for Ovid has imitated the line in his ‘Metamorphoses,’ tamely substituting *tepidi* for the suggestive *biferi*, while again in his ‘Elegies’ he uses the same termination with *odorati* for his epithet. Martial sings of *Pæstanæ rosæ* and *Pæstani gloria ruris*. Even Ausonius,

at the very end of Latin literature, draws from the rosaries of Pæstum a pretty picture of beauty doomed to premature decline :—

Vidi Pæstano gaudere rosaria cultu
Exoriente novo roseida Lucifero.

‘I have watched the rose-beds that luxuriate on Pæstum’s well-tilled soil, all dewy in the young light of the rising dawn-star.’

What a place indeed was this for a rose-garden, spreading far and wide along the fertile plain, with its deep loam reclaimed from swamps and irrigated by the passing of perpetual streams ! But where are the roses now ? As well ask, *où sont les neiges d’antan ?*

We left Amalfi for Capri in the freshness of an early morning at the end of May. As we stepped into our six-oared boat the sun rose above the horizon, flooding the sea with gold and flashing on the terraces above Amalfi. High up along the mountains hung pearly and empurpled mists, set like resting-places between a world too beautiful and heaven too far for mortal feet. Not a breath of any wind was stirring. The water heaved with a scarcely perceptible swell, and the vapours lifted gradually as the sun’s rays grew in power. Here the hills descend abruptly on the sea, ending in cliffs where light reflected from the water dances. Huge caverns open in the limestone ; on their edges hang stalactites like beards, and the sea within sleeps dark as night. For some of these caves the maidenhair fern makes a shadowy curtain ; and all of them might be the home of Proteus, or of Calypso, by whose side her mortal lover passed his nights in vain home-sickness :—

ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ’ οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐβελούσῃ.

This is a truly Odyssean journey. Soon the islands of the Sirens come in sight,—bare bluffs of rock, shaped like galleys

taking flight for the broad sea. As we row past in this ambrosial weather, the oarsmen keeping time and ploughing furrows in the fruitless fields of Nereus, it is not difficult to hear the siren voices—for earth and heaven and sea make melodies far above mortal singing. The water round the Galli—so the islands are now called, as antiquaries tell us, from an ancient fortress named Guallo—is very deep, and not a sign of habitation is to be seen upon them. In bygone ages they were used as prisons; and many doges of Amalfi languished their lives away upon those shadeless stones, watching the sea around them blaze like a burnished shield at noon, and the peaks of Capri deepen into purple when the west was glowing after sunset with the rose and daffodil of Southern twilight.

The end of the Sorrentine promontory, Point Campanella, is absolutely barren—grey limestone, with the scantiest overgrowth of rosemary and myrtle. A more desolate spot can hardly be imagined. But now the morning breeze springs up behind; sails are hoisted, and the boatmen ship their oars. Under the albatross wings of our lateen sails we scud across the freshening waves. The precipice of Capri soars against the sky, and the Bay of Naples expands before us with those sweeping curves and azure amplitude that all the poets of the world have sung. Even thus the mariners of ancient Hellas rounded this headland when the world was young. Rightly they named yon rising ground, beneath Vesuvius, Posilippo—rest from grief. Even now, after all those centuries of toil, though the mild mountain has been turned into a mouth of murderous fire, though Roman emperors and Spanish despots have done their worst to mar what nature made so perfect, we may here lay down the burden of our cares, gaining tranquillity by no mysterious lustral rites, no penitential prayers or offerings of holocausts, but by the influence of beauty in

the earth and air, and by sympathy with a people unspoiled in their healthful life of labour alternating with simple joy.

The last hour of the voyage was beguiled by stories of our boatmen, some of whom had seen service on distant seas, while others could tell of risks on shore and love adventures. They showed us how the tunny-nets were set, and described the solitary life of the tunny-watchers, in their open boats, waiting to spear the monsters of the deep entangled in the chambers made for them beneath the waves. How much of Æschylean imagery, I reflected, is drawn from this old fisher's art—the toils of Clytemnestra and the tragedy of Psyttaleia rising to my mind. One of the crew had his little son with him, a child of six years old; and when the boy was restless, his father spoke of Barbarossa and Timberio (*sic*) to keep him quiet; for the memory of the Moorish pirate and the mighty emperor is still alive here. The people of Capri are as familiar with Tiberius as the Bretons with King Arthur; and the hoof-mark of illustrious crime is stamped upon the island.

Capri offers another example of the versatility of Southern Italy. If Amalfi brings back to us the naval and commercial prosperity of the early middle ages; if Pæstum remains a monument of the oldest Hellenic civilisation; Capri, at a few miles' distance, is dedicated to the Roman emperor who made it his favourite residence, when, life-weary with the world and all its shows, he turned these many peaks and slumbering caves into a summer palace for the nursing of his brain-sick phantasy. Already, on landing, we are led to remember that from this shore was loosed the galley bearing that great letter—*verbosa et grandis epistola*—which undid Sejanus and shook Rome. Riding to Ana-Capri and the Salto di Tiberio, exploring the remains of his favourite twelve villas, and gliding over the smooth waters paved with the white marbles of his baths, we are for ever attended by the

same forbidding spectre. Here, perchance, were the *sēdes arcanarum libidinum* whereof Suetonius speaks ; the Spintrian medals, found in these recesses, still bear witness that the biographer trusted no mere fables for the picture he has drawn. Here, too, below the Villa Jovis, gazing 700 feet sheer down into the waves, we tread the very parapet whence fell the victims of that maniac lust for blood. 'After long and exquisite torments,' says the Roman writer, 'he ordered condemned prisoners to be cast into the sea before his eyes ; marines were stationed near to pound the fallen corpses with poles and oars, lest haply breath should linger in their limbs.' The Neapolitan Museum contains a little basrelief representing Tiberius, with the well-known features of the Claudian house, seated astride upon a donkey, with a girl before him. A slave is leading the beast and its burden to a terminal statue under an olive-tree. This curious relic, discovered some while since at Capri, haunted my fancy as I climbed the olive-planted slopes to his high villa on the Arx Tiberii. It is some relief, amid so much that is tragic in the associations of this place, to have the horrible Tiberius burlesqued and brought into donkey-riding relation with the tourist of to-day. And what an ironical revenge of time it is that his famous Salto should be turned into a restaurant, where the girls dance tarantella for a few coppers ; that a toothless hermit should occupy a cell upon the very summit of his Villa Jovis ; and that the Englishwoman's comfortable hotel should be called *Timberio* by the natives ! A spiritualist might well believe that the emperor's ghost was forced to haunt the island, and to expiate his old atrocities by gazing on these modern vulgarisms.

Few problems suggested by history are more darkly fascinating than the madness of despots ; and of this madness, whether inherent in their blood or encouraged by the

circumstance of absolute autocracy, the emperors of the Claudian and Julian houses furnish the most memorable instance.¹ It is this that renders Tiberius ever present to our memory at Capri. Nor will the student of Suetonius forget his even more memorable grand-nephew Caligula. The following passage is an episode from the biography of that imperial maniac, whose portrait in green basalt, with the strain of dire mental tension on the forehead, is still so beautiful that we are able at this distance of time to pity more than loathe him. 'Above all, he was tormented with nervous irritation, by sleeplessness; for he enjoyed not more than three hours of nocturnal repose, nor even these in pure untroubled rest, but agitated by phantasmata of portentous augury; as, for example, upon one occasion, among other spectral visions, he fancied that he saw the sea, under some definite impersonation, conversing with himself. Hence it was, and from this incapacity of sleeping, and from weariness of lying awake, that he had fallen into habits of ranging all night long through the palace, sometimes throwing himself on a couch, sometimes wandering along the vast corridors, watching for the earliest dawn, and anxiously wishing its approach.' Those corridors, or loggie, where Caligula spent his wakeful hours, opened perchance upon this Bay of Naples, if not upon the sea-waves of his favourite Porto d' Anzio; for we know that one of his great follies was a palace built above the sea on piles at Baïæ; and where else could *Pelagus*, with his cold azure eyes and briny locks, have more appropriately terrified his sleep with prophecy conveyed in dreams? The very nature of this vision, selected for such special comment

¹ De Quincey, in his essay on *The Cæsars*, has worked out this subject with such artistic vividness that no more need be said. From his pages I have quoted the paraphrastic version of Suetonius that follows.

by Suetonius as to show that it had troubled Caligula profoundly, proves the fantastic nature of the man, and justifies the hypothesis of insanity.

But it is time to shake off the burden of the past. Only students, carrying superfluity of culture in their knapsacks, will ponder over the imperial lunatics who made Capri and Baia fashionable in the days of ancient Rome. Neither Tiberius nor Caligula, nor yet Ferdinand of Aragon or Bomba for that matter, has been able to leave trace of vice or scar of crime on nature in this Eden. A row round the island, or a supper-party in the loggia above the sea at sunset-time, is no less charming now, in spite of Roman or Spanish memories, than when the world was young.

Sea-mists are frequent in the early summer mornings, swathing the cliffs of Capri in impenetrable wool and brooding on the perfectly smooth water till the day-wind rises. Then they disappear like magic, rolling in smoke-wreaths from the surface of the sea, condensing into clouds and climbing the hillsides like Oceanides in quest of Prometheus, or taking their station on the watch-towers of the world, as in the chorus of the *Nephelei*. Such a morning may be chosen for the *giro* of the island. The blue grotto loses nothing of its beauty, but rather gains by contrast, when passing from dense fog you find yourself transported to a world of wavering subaqueous sheen. It is only through the opening of the very topmost arch that a boat can glide into this cavern; the arch itself spreads downward through the water, so that all the light is transmitted from beneath and coloured by the sea. The grotto is domed in many chambers; and the water is so clear that you can see the bottom, silvery, with black-finned fishes diapered upon the blue white sand. The flesh of a diver in this water showed like the faces of children playing at snapdragon; all around him the spray leapt up with

living fire ; and when the oars struck the surface, it was as though a phosphorescent sea had been smitten, and the drops ran from the blades in blue pearls. I have only once seen anything (outside the magic-world of a pantomime) to equal these effects of blue and silver ; and that was when I made my way into an ice-cave in the Great Aletsch glacier—not an artificial gallery such as they cut at Grindelwald, but a natural cavern, arched, hollowed into fanciful recesses, and hung with stalactites of pendent ice. The difference between the glacier-cavern and the sea-grotto was that in the former all the light was transmitted through transparent sides, so that the whole was one uniform azure, except in rare places where little chinks opened upwards to the air, and the light of day came glancing with a roseate flush. In the latter the light sent from beneath through the water played upon a roof of rock ; reflections intermingled with translucence ; and a greater variety of light and shadow compensated the lack of that strange sense of being shut within a solid gem.

Numberless are the caves at Capri. The so-called green grotto has the beauty of moss-agate in its liquid floor ; the red grotto shows a warmer chord of colour ; and where there is no other charm to notice, endless beauty may be found in the play of sunlight upon roofs of limestone, tinted with yellow, orange, and pale pink, mossed over, hung with fern, and catching tones of blue or green from the still deeps beneath.

Sheets of water, wherever found, are the most subtle heighteners of colour. To those who are familiar with Venetian or Mantuan sunsets, who have seen the flocks of flamingoes reflected on the lagoons of Tunis, or who have watched stormy red flakes tossed from crest to crest of great Atlantic waves on our own coasts, this need hardly be said. Yet I cannot leave this beauty of the sea at Capri without

touching on a melodrama of light and colour I once saw at Castellammare. It was a festa night, when the people sent up rockets and fireworks of every hue from the harbour-breakwater. The surf rolled shoreward like a bath of molten metals, all confused of blue, and red, and green, and gold—dying dolphin tints that burned strangely beneath the purple skies and tranquil stars. Boats at sea hung out their crimson cressets, flickering in long lines on the bay; and larger craft moved slowly with rows of lamps defining their curves; while the full moon shed over all her ‘vitreous pour, just tinged with blue.’ To some tastes this mingling of natural and artificial effects would seem unworthy of sober notice; but I confess to having enjoyed it with childish eagerness like music never to be forgotten.

After a day upon the water it is pleasant to rest at sunset in the loggia above the sea. The Bay of Naples stretches far and wide in front, beautiful by reason chiefly of the long fine line descending from Vesuvius, dipping almost to a level and then gliding up to join the highlands of the north. Now sun and moon begin to mingle: waning and waxing splendours. The cliffs above our heads are still blushing a deep flame-colour, like the heart of some tea-rose; when lo, the touch of the huntress is laid upon those eastern pinnacles, and the horizon glimmers with her rising. Was it on such a night that Ferdinand of Aragon fled from his capital before the French, with eyes turned ever to the land he loved, chanting, as he leaned from his galley’s stern, that melancholy psalm—‘Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain’—and seeing Naples dwindle to a white blot on the purple shore?

Our journey takes the opposite direction. Farewell to Capri, welcome to Sorrento! The roads are sweet with scent of acacia and orange flowers. When you walk in a garden at

night, the white specks beneath your feet are fallen petals of lemon blossoms. Over the walls hang cataracts of roses, honey-pale clusters of the Banksia rose, and pink bushes of the China rose, growing as we never see them grow with us. The grey rocks wave with gladiolus—feathers of crimson, set amid tufts of rosemary, and myrtle, and tree-spurge. In the clefts of the sandstone, and behind the orchard walls, sleeps a dark green night of foliage, in the midst of which gleam globed oranges, and lemons dropping like great pearls of palest amber dew. It is difficult to believe that the lemons have not grown into length by their own weight, as though mere hanging on the bough prevented them from being round—so waxen are they. Overhead soar stone-pines—a roof of sombre green, a lattice-work of strong red branches, through which the moon peers wonderfully. One part of this marvellous *piano* is bare rock tufted with keen-scented herbs, and sparsely grown with locust-trees and olives. Another waves from sea to summit with beech-copses and oak-woods, as verdant as the most abundant English valley. Another region turns its hoary raiment of olive-gardens to the sun and sea, or flourishes with fig and vine. Everywhere, the houses of men are dazzling white, perched on natural coigns of vantage, clustered on the brink of brown cliffs, nestling under mountain eaves, or piled up from the sea-beach in ascending tiers, until the broad knees of the hills are reached, and great Pan, the genius of solitude in nature, takes unto himself a region yet untenanted by man. The occupations of the sea and land are blent together on this shore; and the people are both blithe and gentle. It is true that their passions are upon the surface, and that the knife is ready to their hand. But the combination of fierceness and softness in them has an infinite charm when one has learned by observation that their lives are laborious and frugal, and that

their honesty is hardly less than their vigour. Happy indeed are they—so happy that, but for crimes accumulated through successive generations by bad governors, and but for superstitions cankering the soul within, they might deserve what Shelley wrote of his imagined island in ‘Epipsychidion.’

ETNA

THE eruptions of Etna have blackened the whole land for miles in every direction. That is the first observation forced upon one in the neighbourhood of Catania, or Giarre, or Bronte. From whatever point of view you look at Etna, it is always a regular pyramid, with long and gradually sloping sides, broken here and there by the excrescence of minor craters and dotted over with villages; the summit crowned with snow, divided into peak and cone, girdled with clouds, and capped with smoke, that shifts shape as the wind veers, dominates a blue-black monstrous mass of outpoured lava. From the top of Monte Rosso, a subordinate volcano which broke into eruption in 1669, you can trace the fountain from which 'the unapproachable river of purest fire,' that nearly destroyed Catania, issued. You see it still, bubbling up like a frozen geyser from the flank of the mountain, whence the sooty torrent spreads, or rather sprawls, with jagged edges to the sea. The plain of Catania lies at your feet, threaded by the Simeto, bounded by the promontory of Syracuse and the mountains of Castro Giovanni. This huge amorphous blot upon the landscape may be compared to an ink-stain on a variegated tablecloth, or to the coal districts marked upon a geological atlas, or to the heathen in a missionary map—the green and red and grey colours standing for Christians and Mahomedans and Jews of different shades and qualities. The lava, where it has been cultivated, is reduced to fertile

sand, in which vines and fig-trees are planted—their tender green foliage contrasting strangely with the sinister soil that makes them flourish. All the roads are black as jet, like paths leading to coal-pits, and the country-folk on mule-back plodding along them look like Arabs on an infernal Sahara. The very lizards which haunt the rocks are swart and smutty. Yet the flora of the district is luxuriant. The gardens round Catania, nestling into cracks and ridges of the stiffened flood, are marvellously brilliant with spurge and fennel and valerian. It is impossible to form a true conception of flower-brightness till one has seen these golden and crimson tints upon their ground of ebony, or to realise the blueness of the Mediterranean except in contrast with the lava where it breaks into the sea. Copses of frail oak and ash, undergrown with ferns of every sort; cactus-hedges, orange-trees grafted with lemons and laden with both fruits; olives of scarce two centuries' growth, and fig-trees knobbed with their sweet produce, overrun the sombre soil, and spread their boughs against the deep blue sea and the translucent amethyst of the Calabrian mountains. Underfoot, a convolvulus with large white blossoms, binding dingy stone to stone, might be compared to a rope of Desdemona's pearls upon the neck of Othello.

The villages are perhaps the most curious feature of this scenery. Their houses, rarely more than one story high, are walled, paved, and often roofed with the inflexible material which once was ruinous fire, and is now the servant of the men it threatened to destroy. The churches are such as might be raised in Hades to implacable Proserpine, such as one might dream of in a vision of the world turned into hell, such as Baudelaire in his fiction of a metallic landscape might have imagined under the influence of hasheesh. Their flights of steps are built of sharply cut black lava blocks no

feet can wear. Their door-jambs and columns and pediments and carved work are wrought and sculptured of the same gloomy masonry. How forbidding are the acanthus scrolls, how grim the skulls and cross-bones on these portals! The bell-towers, again, are ribbed and beamed with black lava. A certain amount of the structure is whitewashed, which serves to relieve the funereal solemnity of the rest. In an Indian district each of these churches would be a temple, raised in vain propitiation to the demon of the fire above and below. Some pictures made by their spires in combination with the sad village-hovels, the snowy dome of Etna, and the ever-smiling sea, are quite unique in their variety of suggestion and wild beauty.

The people have a sorrow-smitten and stern aspect. Some of the men in the prime of life are grand and haughty, with the cast-bronze countenance of Roman emperors. But the old men bear rigid faces of carved basalt, gazing fixedly before them as though at some time or other in their past lives they had met Medusa: and truly Etna in eruption is a Gorgon, which their ancestors have oftentimes seen shuddering, and fled from terror-frozen. The white-haired old women, plying their spindle or distaff, or meditating in grim solitude, sit with the sinister set features of Fates by their doorways. The young people are very rarely seen to smile: they open hard, black, beaded eyes upon a world in which there is little for them but endurance or the fierceness of passions that delight in blood. Strangely different are these dwellers on the sides of Etna from the voluble, lithe sailors of Sciacca or Mazara, with their sunburnt skins and many-coloured garments.

The Val del Bove—a vast chasm in the flank of Etna, where the very heart of the volcano has been riven and its entrails bared—is the most impressive spot of all this region.

The road to it leads from Zafferana (so called because of its crocus-flowers) along what looks like a series of black moraines, where the lava torrents pouring from the craters of Etna have spread out, and reared themselves in stiffened ridges against opposing mountain buttresses. After toiling for about three hours over the dismal waste, a point between the native rock of Etna and the dead sea of lava is reached, which commands a prospect of the cone with its curling smoke surmounting a caldron of some four thousand feet in depth and seemingly very wide. The whole of this space is filled with billows of blackness, wave on wave, crest over crest, and dyke by dyke, precisely similar to a gigantic glacier, swarthy and immovable. The resemblance of the lava flood to a glacier is extraordinarily striking. One can fancy oneself standing on the Belvedere at Macugnaga, or the Tacul point upon the Mer de Glace, in some nightmare, and finding to one's horror that the radiant snows and river-breeding ice-fields have been turned by a malignant deity to sullen, stationary cinders. It is a most hideous place, like a pit in Dante's Hell, disused for some unexplained reason, and left untenanted by fiends. The scenery of the moon, without atmosphere and without life, must be of this sort; and such, rolling round in space, may be some planet that has survived its own combustion. When the clouds, which almost always hang about the Val del Bove, are tumbling at their awful play around its precipices, veiling the sweet suggestion of distant sea and happier hills that should be visible, the horror of this view is aggravated. Breaking here and there, the billows of mist disclose forlorn tracts of jet-black desolation, wicked, unutterable, hateful in their hideousness, with patches of smutty snow above, and downward-rolling volumes of murky smoke. Shakspeare, when he imagined the damned spirits confined to 'thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,'

divined the nature of a glacier; but what line could he have composed, adequate to shadow forth the tortures of a soul condemned to palpitate for ever between the ridges of this thirsty and intolerable sea of dead fire? If the world-spirit chose to assume for itself the form and being of a dragon, of like substance to this, impenetrable, invulnerable, unapproachable would be its hide. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to picture these lava lakes glowing, as they must have been, when first outpoured, the bellowing of the crater, the heaving and surging of the solid earth, the air obstructed with cinders and whizzing globes of molten rock. Yet in these throes of devilish activity, the Val del Bove would be less insufferable than in its present state of suspension, asleep, but threatening, ready to regurgitate its flame, but for a moment inert.

An hour's drive from Nicolosi or Zafferana, seaward, brings one into the richest land of 'olive and aloe and maize and vine' to be found upon the face of Europe. Here, too, are laughing little towns, white, prosperous, and gleeful, the very opposite of those sad stations on the mountain-flank. Every house in Aci Reale has its courtyard garden filled with orange-trees, and nespole, and fig-trees, and oleanders. From the grinning corbels that support the balconies hang tufts of gem-bright ferns and glowing clove-pinks. Pergolas of vines, bronzed in autumn, and golden green like chrysoprased beneath an April sun, fling their tendrils over white walls and shady loggie. Gourds hang ripening in the steady blaze. Far and wide stretches a landscape rich with tilth and husbandry, boon Nature paying back to men tenfold for all their easy toil. The terrible great mountain sleeps in the distance innocent of fire. I know not whether this land be more delightful in spring or autumn. The little flamelike flakes of brightness upon vines and fig-trees in April have their

own peculiar charm. But in November the whole vast flank of Etna glows with the deep-blue tone of steel; the russet woods are like a film of rust; the vine-boughs thrust living carbuncles against the sun. To this season, when the peculiar earth-tints of Etna, its strong purples and tawny browns, are harmonised with the decaying wealth of forest and of orchard, I think the palm of beauty must be given in this land.

The sea is an unchangeable element of charm in all this landscape. Aci Castello should be visited, and those strange rocks, called the Ciclopidi, forced by volcanic pressure from beneath the waves. They are made of black basalt like the Giant's Causeway; and on their top can be traced the caps of calcareous stone they carried with them in the fret and fury of their upheaval from the sea-bed. Samphire, wild fennel, cactus, and acanthus clothe them now from crest to basement where the cliff is not too sheer. By the way, there are few plants more picturesque than the acanthus in full flower. Its pale lilac spikes of blossom stand waist-high above a wilderness of feathering, curving, delicately indented, burnished leaves—deep, glossy, cool, and green.

This is the place for a child's story of the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, who fed his flocks among the oak-woods of Etna, and who, strolling by the sea one summer evening, saw and loved the fair girl Galatea. She was afraid of him, and could not bear his shaggy-browed round rolling eye. But he forgot his sheep and goats, and sat upon the cliffs and piped to her. Meanwhile she loved the beautiful boy Acis, who ran down from the copse to play with her upon the sea-beach. They hid together from Polyphemus in a fern-curtained cavern of the shore. But Polyphemus spied them out and heard them laughing together at their games. Then he grew wroth, and stamped with his huge feet upon the

earth, and made it shake and quiver. He roared and bellowed in his rage, and tore up rocks and flung them at the cavern where the children were in hiding, and his eye shot fire beneath the grisly pent-house of his wrinkled brows. They, in their sore distress, prayed to heaven; and their prayers were heard: Galatea became a mermaid, so that she might swim and sport like foam upon the crests of the blue sea; and Acis was changed into a stream that leapt from the hills to play with her amid bright waters. But Polyphemus, in punishment for his rage, and spite, and jealousy, was forced to live in the mid-furnaces of Etna. There he growled and groaned and shot forth flame in impotent fury; for though he remembered the gladness of those playfellows, and sought to harm them by tossing red-hot rocks upon the shore, yet the light sea ever laughed, and the radiant river found its way down from the copsewood to the waves. The throes of Etna in convulsion are the pangs of his great giant's heart, pent up and sick with love for the bright sea and gladsome sun; for, as an old poet sings:—

There's love when holy heaven doth wound the earth;
And love still prompts the land to yearn for bridals:
The rain that falls in rivers from the sky,
Impregnates earth: and she brings forth for men
The flocks and herds and life of teeming Ceres.

To which let us add:—

But sometimes love is barren, when broad hills,
Rent with the pangs of passion, yearn in vain,
Pouring fire tears adown their furrowed cheeks,
And heaving in the impotence of anguish.

There are few places in Europe where the poetic truth of Greek mythology is more apparent than here upon the coast between Etna and the sea. Of late, philosophers have been eager to tell us that the beautiful legends of the Greeks, which

contain in the coloured haze of fancy all the thoughts afterwards expressed by that divine race in poetry and sculpture, are but decayed phrases, dead sentences, and words whereof the meaning was forgotten. In this theory there is a certain truth; for mythology stands midway between the first lisplings of a nation in its language, and its full-developed utterances in art. Yet we have only to visit the scenes which gave birth to some Hellenic myth, and we perceive at once that, whatever philology may affirm, the legend was a living poem, a drama of life and passion transferred from human experience to the inanimate world by those early myth-makers, who were the first and the most fertile of all artists. Persephone was the patroness of Sicily, because amid the billowy cornfields of her mother Demeter and the meadow flowers she loved in girlhood, are ever found sulphurous ravines and chasms breathing vapour from the pit of Hades. What were the Cyclops—that race of one-eyed giants—but the many minor cones of Etna? Observed from the sea by mariners, or vaguely spoken of by the natives, who had reason to dread their rage, these hillocks became lawless and devouring giants, each with one round burning eye. Afterwards the tales of Titans who had warred with Zeus were realised in this spot. Typhœus or Enceladus made the mountain heave and snort; while Hephæstus not unnaturally forged thunderbolts in the central caverns of a volcano that never ceased to smoke. To the student of art and literature, mythology is chiefly interesting in its latest stages, when, the linguistic origin of special legends being utterly forgotten, the poets of the race played freely with its rich material. Who cares to be told that Achilles was the sun, when the child of Thetis and the lover of Patroclus has been sung for us by Homer? Are the human agonies of the doomed house of Thebes made less appalling by tracing back the tale of Œdipus to some

prosaic source in old astronomy? The incest of Jocasta is the subject of supreme tragic art. It does not improve the matter, or whitewash the imagination of the Greeks, as some have fondly fancied, to unravel the fabric wrought by Homer and by Sophocles, into its raw material in Aryan dialects. Indeed, this new method of criticism bids fair to destroy for young minds the human lessons of pathos and heroism in Greek poetry, and to create an obscure conviction that the greatest race of artists the world has ever produced were but dotards, helplessly dreaming over distorted forms of speech and obsolete phraseology.

Let us bid farewell to Etna from Taormina. All along the coast between Aci and Giardini the mountain towers distinct against a sunset sky—divested of its robe of cloud, translucent and blue as some dark sea-built crystal. The Val del Bove is shown to be a circular crater in which the lava has boiled and bubbled over to the fertile land beneath. As we reach Giardini, the young moon is shining, and the night is alive with stars so large and bright that they seem leaning down to whisper in the ears of our soul. The sea is calm, touched here and there on the fringes of the bays and headlands with silvery light; and impendent crags loom black and sombre against the feeble azure of the moonlit sky. *Quale per incertam lunam et sub luce malignâ*: such is our journey, with Etna, a grey ghost, behind our path, and the reflections of stars upon the sea, and glow-worms in the hedges, and the mystical still splendour of the night, that, like Death, liberates the soul, raising it above all common things, simplifying the outlines of the earth as well as our own thoughts to one twilight hush of aërial tranquillity. It is a strange compliment to such a landscape to say that it recalls a scene from an opera. Yet so it is. What the arts of the scene-painter and the musician strive to

suggest is here realised in fact ; the mood of the soul created by music and by passion is natural here, spontaneous, prepared by the divine artists of earth, air, and sea.

Was there ever such another theatre as this of Taormina ? Turned to the south, hollowed from the crest of a promontory 1000 feet above the sea, it faces Etna with its crown of snow : below, the coast sweeps onward to Catania and the distant headland of Syracuse. From the back the shore of Sicily curves with delicately indented bays towards Messina : then come the straits, and the blunt mass of the Calabrian mountains terminating Italy at Spartivento. Every spot on which the eye can rest is rife with reminiscences. It was there, we say, looking northward to the straits, that Ulysses tossed between Scylla and Charybdis ; there, turning towards the flank of Etna, that he met with Polyphemos and defied the giant from his galley. From yonder snow-capped eyrie, *Αἴτνας σκοπία*, the rocks were hurled on Acis. And all along that shore, after Persephone was lost, went Demeter, torch in hand, wailing for the daughter she could no more find among Sicilian villages. Then, leaving myths for history, we remember how the ships of Nikias set sail from Reggio, and coasted the forelands at our feet, past Naxos, on their way to Catania and Syracuse. Gylippus afterwards in his swift galley took the same course : and Dion, when he came to destroy his nephew's empire. Here too Timoleon landed, resolute in his firm will to purge the isle of tyrants.

What scenes, more spirit-shaking than any tragic shows—pageants of fire and smoke, and mountains in commotion—are witnessed from these grassy benches, when the earth rocks, and the sea is troubled, and the side of Etna flows with flame, and night grows horrible with bellowings that forebode changes in empires !—

Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros
 Vidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Ætnam,
 Flammæque globos liquefactaque volvere saxa.

The stage of these tremendous pomps is very calm and peaceful now. Lying among acanthus leaves and asphodels, bound together by wreaths of white and pink convolvulus, we only feel that this is the loveliest landscape on which our eyes have ever rested or can rest. The whole scene is a symphony of blues—gemlike lapis-lazuli in the sea, ærial azure in the distant headlands, light-irradiated sapphire in the sky, and impalpable vapour-mantled purple upon Etna. The grey tones of the neighbouring cliffs, and the glowing brickwork of the ruined theatre, through the arches of which shine sea and hillside, enhance by contrast these modulations of the one prevailing hue. Etna is the dominant feature of the landscape—*Αἴτνα μάτερ ἐμά—πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα*—than which no other mountain is more sublimely solitary, more worthy of Pindar's praise, 'The pillar of heaven, the nurse of sharp eternal snow.' It is Etna that gives its unique character of elevated beauty to this coast scenery, raising it to a grander and more tragic level than the landscape of the Cornice and the Bay of Naples.

PALERMO

THE NORMANS IN SICILY

SICILY, in the centre of the Mediterranean, has been throughout all history the meeting-place and battle-ground of the races that contributed to civilise the West. It was here that the Greeks measured their strength against Phœnicia, and that Carthage fought her first duel with Rome. Here the bravery of Hellenes triumphed over barbarian force in the victories of Gelon and Timoleon. Here, in the harbour of Syracuse, the Athenian Empire succumbed to its own intemperate ambition. Here, in the end, Rome laid her mortmain upon Greek, Phœnician, and Sikeliot alike, turning the island into a granary and reducing its inhabitants to serfdom. When the classic age had closed, when Belisarius had vainly reconquered from the Goths for the empire of the East the fair island of Persephone and Zeus Olympius, then came the Mussulman, filling up with an interval of Oriental luxury and Arabian culture the period of utter deadness between the ancient and the modern world. To Islam succeeded the conquerors of the house of Hauteville, Norman knights who had but lately left their Scandinavian shores, and settled in the northern provinces of France. The Normans flourished for a season, and were merged in a line of Suabian princes, old Barbarossa's progeny. German rulers thus came to sway the corn-lands of Trinacria, until the bitter hatred of the Popes extinguished the house of Hohenstauffen upon the battlefield

of Grandella and the scaffold of Naples. Frenchmen had the next turn—for a brief space only; since Palermo cried to the sound of her tocsins, ‘Mora, Mora,’ and the tyranny of Anjou was expunged with blood. Spain, the tardy and patient power, which inherited so much from the failure of more brilliant races, came at last, and tightened so firm a hold upon the island, that from the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, with one brief exception, Sicily belonged to the princes of Aragon, Castile, and Bourbon. These vicissitudes have left their traces everywhere. The Greek temples of Segeste and Girgenti and Selinus, the Roman amphitheatre of Syracuse, the Byzantine mosaics and Saracenic villas of Palermo, the Norman cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù, and the Spanish habits which still characterise the life of Sicilian cities, testify to the successive strata of races which have been deposited upon the island. Amid its anarchy of tongues, the Latin alone has triumphed. In the time of the Greek colonists Sicily was polyglot. During the Saracenic occupation it was trilingual. It is now, and during modern history it has always been, Italian. Differences of language and of nationality have gradually been fused into one substance, by the spirit which emanates from Rome, and vivifies the Latin race.

The geographical position of Sicily has always influenced its history in a very marked way. The eastern coast, which is turned towards Greece and Italy, has been the centre of Aryan civilisation in the island, so that during Greek and Roman ascendancy Syracuse was held the capital. The western end, which projects into the African sea, was occupied in the time of the Hellenes by Phœnicians, and afterwards by Mussulmans: consequently Panormus, the ancient seat of Punic colonists, now called Palermo, became the centre of the Moslem rule, which, inherited entire by the Norman chieftains,

was transmitted eventually to Spain. Palermo, devoid of classic monuments, and unknown except as a name to the historians of Greek civilisation, is therefore the modern capital of the island. 'Prima sedes, corona regis, et regni caput,' is the motto inscribed upon the cathedral porch and the archiepiscopal throne of Palermo: nor has any other city, except Messina,¹ presumed to contest this title.

Perhaps there are few spots upon the surface of the globe more beautiful than Palermo. The hills on either hand descend upon the sea with long-drawn delicately broken outlines, so exquisitely tinted with ærial hues, that at early dawn or beneath the blue light of a full moon the panorama seems to be some fabric of the fancy, that must fade away, 'like shapes of clouds we form,' to nothing. Within the cradle of these hills, and close upon the tideless water, lies the city. Behind and around on every side stretches the famous *Conca d'Oro*, or golden shell, a plain of marvellous fertility, so called because of its richness and also because of its shape; for it tapers to a fine point where the mountains meet, and spreads abroad, where they diverge, like a cornucopia, toward the sea. The whole of this long vega is a garden, thick with olive-groves and orange-trees, with orchards of nespole and palms and almonds, with fig-trees and locust-trees, with judas-trees that blush in spring, and with flowers as multitudinously brilliant as the fretwork of sunset clouds. It was here that in the days of the Kelbite dynasty, the sugar-cane and cotton-tree and mulberry supplied both East and West with produce for the banquet and the paper-mill and the silk-loom; and though these industries are now neglected, vast gardens of

¹ Messina, owing to its mercantile position between the Levant, Italy, and France, and as the key to Sicily from the mainland, might probably have become the modern capital had not the Normans found a state machinery ready to their use centralised at Palermo.

cactuses still give a strangely Oriental character to the scenery of Palermo, while the land flows with honey-sweet wine instead of sugar. The language in which Arabian poets extolled the charms of this fair land is even now nowise extravagant: 'Oh how beautiful is the lakelet of the twin palms, and the island where the spacious palace stands! The limpid water of the double springs resembles liquid pearls, and their basin is a sea: you would say that the branches of the trees stretched down to see the fishes in the pool and smile at them. The great fishes swim in those clear waters, and the birds among the gardens tune their songs. The ripe oranges of the island are like fire that burns on boughs of emerald; the pale lemon reminds me of a lover who has passed the night in weeping for his absent darling. The two palms may be compared to lovers who have gained an inaccessible retreat against their enemies, or raise themselves erect in pride to confound the murmurs and ill thoughts of jealous men. O palms of the two lakelets of Palermo, may ceaseless, undisturbed, and plenteous dews for ever keep your freshness!' Such is the poetry which suits the environs of Palermo, where the Moorish villas of La Zisa and La Cuba and La Favara still stand, and where the modern gardens, though wilder, are scarcely less delightful than those beneath which King Roger discoursed with Edrisi, and Gian da Procida surprised his sleeping mistress.¹ The groves of oranges and lemons are an inexhaustible source of joy: not only because of their 'golden lamps in a green night,' but also because of their silvery constellations, nebulae, and drifts of stars, in the same green night, and milky ways of blossoms on the ground beneath. As in all southern scenery, the transition from these perfumed thickly clustering gardens to the bare unirrigated hillsides is very striking. There the dwarf-

¹ Boccaccio, *Giorn.* v. Nov. 6.

palm tufts with its spiky foliage the clefts of limestone rock, and the lizards run in and out among bushes of tree-spurge and wild cactus and grey asphodels. The sea-shore is a tangle of lilac and oleander and laurustinus and myrtle and lentisk and cytissus and geranium. The flowering plants that make our shrubberies gay in spring with blossoms, are here wild, running riot upon the sand-heaps of Mondello or beneath the barren slopes of Monte Pellegrino.

It was into this terrestrial paradise, cultivated through two preceding centuries by the Arabs, who of all races were wisest in the arts of irrigation and landscape-gardening, that the Norsemen entered as conquerors, and lay down to pass their lives.¹

No chapter of history more resembles a romance than that which records the sudden rise and brief splendour of the house of Hauteville. In one generation the sons of Tancred passed from the condition of squires in the Norman vale of

¹ The Saracens possessed themselves of Sicily by a gradual conquest, which began about 827 A.D. Disembarking on the little isle of Pantellaria and the headland of Lilybœum, where of old the Carthaginians used to enter Sicily, they began by overrunning the island for the first four years. In 831 they took Palermo; during the next ten years they subjugated the Val di Mazara; between 841 and 859 they possessed themselves of the Val di Noto; after this they extended their conquest over the seaport towns of the Val Demone, but neglected to reduce the whole of the N.E. district. Syracuse was stormed and reduced to ruins after a desperate defence in 878, while Leo, the heir of the Greek Empire, contented himself with composing two Anacreontic elegies on the disaster at Byzantium. In 895 Sicily was wholly lost to the Greeks, by a treaty signed between the Saracens and the remaining Christian towns. The Christians during the Mussulman occupation were divided into four classes—(1) A few independent municipalities obedient loosely to the Greek Empire; (2) tributaries who paid the Arabs what they would otherwise have sent to Byzantium; (3) vassals, whose towns had fallen by arms or treaty into the hands of the conquerors, and who, though their property was respected and religion tolerated, were called 'dsimmi' or 'humbled'; (4) serfs, prisoners of war, sold as slaves or attached to the soil (*Amari*, vol. i.).

Cotentin, to kinghood in the richest island of the southern sea. The Norse adventurers became Sultans of an Oriental capital. The sea-robbers assumed together with the sceptre the culture of an Arabian court. The marauders whose armies burned Rome, received at papal hands the mitre and dalmatic as symbols of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.¹ The brigands who on their first appearance in Italy had pillaged stables and farmyards to supply their needs, lived to mate their daughters with princes and to sway the politics of Europe with gold. The freebooters, whose skill consisted in the use of sword and shield, whose brains were vigorous in strategy or statecraft, and whose pleasures were confined to the hunting-field and the wine-cup, raised villas like the Zisa and encrusted the cathedral of Monreale with mosaics. Finally, while the race was yet vigorous, after giving two heroes to the first Crusade, it transmitted its titles, its temper, and its blood to the great Emperor, who was destined to fight out upon the battlefield of Italy the strife of Empire against Papacy, and to bequeath to mediæval Europe the tradition of cosmopolitan culture. The physical energy of this brood of heroes was such as can scarcely be paralleled in history. Tancred de Hauteville begat two families by different wives. Of his children twelve were sons; two of whom stayed with their father in Normandy, while ten sought fame and found a kingdom in the south. Of these, William Iron Arm, the first Count of Apulia; Robert Guiscard, who united Calabria and Apulia under one dukedom, and carried victorious arms against both Emperors of East and West; and Roger the Great Count, who added Sicily to the conquests of the Normans and bequeathed the kingdom of South Italy to his son, rose to the highest name. But all the brothers shared

¹ King Roger in the mosaics of the Martorana Church at Palermo wears the dalmatic, and receives his crown from the hands of Christ.

the great qualities of the house ; and two of them, Humphrey and Drogo, also wore a coronet. Large of limb and stout of heart, persevering under difficulties, crafty yet gifted with the semblance of sincerity, combining the piety of pilgrims with the morals of highwaymen, the sturdiness of barbarians with the plasticity of culture, eloquent in the council-chamber and the field, dear to their soldiers for their bravery and to women for their beauty, equally eminent as generals and as rulers, restrained by no scruples but such as policy suggested, restless in their energy, yet neither fickle nor rash, comprehensive in their views, but indefatigable in detail, these lions among men were made to conquer in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and to hold their conquests with a grasp of iron. What they wrought, whether wisely or not for the ultimate advantage of Italy, endures to this day, while the work of so many emperors, republics, and princes has passed and shifted like the scenes in a pantomime. Through them the Greeks, the Lombards, and the Moors were extinguished in the south. The Papacy was checked in its attempt to found a province of S. Peter below the Tiber. The republics of Naples, Gaeta, Amalfi, which might have rivalled perchance with Milan, Genoa, and Florence, were subdued to a master's hand. In short, to the Normans Italy owed that kingdom of the Two Sicilies which formed one-third of her political balance, and which proved the cause of all her most serious revolutions.

Roger, the youngest of the Hauteville family, and the founder of the kingdom of Sicily, showed by his untamable spirit and sound intellect that his father's vigour remained unexhausted. Each of Tancred's sons was physically speaking a masterpiece, and the last was the prime work of all. This Roger, styled the Great Count, begat a second Roger, the first King of Sicily, whose son and grandson, both named William, ruled in succession at Palermo. With them the

direct line of the house of Hauteville expired. It would seem as if the energy and fertility of the stock had been drained by its efforts in the first three generations. Constance, the heiress of the family, who married Henry VI. and gave birth to the Emperor Frederick II., was daughter of King Roger, and therefore third in descent from Tancred. Drawing her blood more immediately from the parent stem, she thus transmitted to the princes of the race of Hohenstauffen the vigour of her Norman ancestry unweakened. This was a circumstance of no small moment in the history of Europe. Upon the fierce and daring Suabian stem were grafted the pertinacity, the cunning, the versatility of the Norman adventurers. Young Frederick, while strong and subtle enough to stand for himself against the world, was so finely tempered by the blended strains of his parentage that he received the polish of an Oriental education without effeminacy. Called upon to administer the affairs of Germany, to govern Italy, to contend with the Papacy, and to settle by arms and treaties the great Oriental question of his days, Frederick, cosmopolitan from the cradle, was equal to the task. Had Europe been but ready, the Renaissance would have dated from his reign, and a universal empire, if not of political government, yet of intellectual culture, might have been firmly instituted.

Of the personal appearance of the Norman chiefs—their fair hair, clear eyes, and broad shoulders—we hear much from the chroniclers. One minutely studied portrait will serve to bring the whole race vividly before us. Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, the son of Robert Guiscard, and first cousin to Tancred of Montferrat, was thus described by Anna Comnena, who saw him at her father's court during the first Crusade: 'Neither amongst our own nation (the Greeks), nor amongst foreigners, is there in our age a man equal to Bohemond. His presence dazzled the eyes, as his reputation the fancy,

He was one cubit taller than the tallest man known. In his waist he was thin, but broad in his shoulders and chest, without being either too thin or too fat. His arms were strong, his hands full and large, his feet firm and solid. He stooped a little, but through habit only, and not on account of any deformity. He was fair, but on his cheeks there was an agreeable mixture of vermillion. His hair was not loose over his shoulders, according to the fashion of the barbarians, but was cut above his ears. His eyes were blue, and full of wrath and fierceness. His nostrils were large, inasmuch as having a wide chest and a great heart, his lungs required an unusual quantity of air to moderate the warmth of his blood. His handsome face had in itself something gentle and softening, but the height of his person and the fierceness of his looks had something wild and terrible. He was more dreadful in his smiles than others in their rage.' When we read this description, remembering the romance of Bohemond's ancestry and his own life, we do not wonder at the tales of chivalry. Those 'knights of Logres and of Lyonesse, Lancelot or Pelleas or Pellenore,' with whose adventures our tawny-haired magnificent Plantagenets amused their leisure, become realities. The manly beauty, described by the Byzantine princess in words which seem to betray a more than common interest in her handsome foe, was hereditary in the house of Hauteville. They transmitted it to the last of the Suabian dynasty, to Manfred and Conradin, and to the king Enzo, whose long golden hair fell down from his shoulders to his saddle-bow as he rode, a captive, into Bologna.

The story of the Norman conquest is told by two chroniclers—William of Apulia, who received his materials from Robert Guiscard, and Godfrey Malaterra, who wrote down the oral narrative of Roger. Thus we possess what is tantamount to personal memoirs of the Norman chiefs. Nevertheless, a veil

of legendary romance obscures the first appearance of the Scandinavian warriors upon the scene of history. William of Apulia tells how, in the course of a pilgrimage to S. Michael's shrine on Monte Gargano, certain knights of Normandy were accosted by a stranger of imposing aspect, who persuaded them to draw their swords in the quarrel of the Lombard towns of South Italy against the Greeks. This man was Melo of Bari. Whether his invitation were so theatrically conveyed or not, it is probable that the Norsemen made their first acquaintance with Apulia on a pilgrimage to the Italian Michael's mount; and it is certain that Melo, whom we dimly descry as a patriot of enlarged views and indomitable constancy, provided them with arms and horses, raised troops in Salerno and Benevento to assist them, and directed them against the Greeks. This happened in 1017. Twelve years later we find the town of Aversa built and occupied by Normans under the control of their Count Rainulf; while another band, headed by Ardoin, a Lombard of Milan, lived at large upon the country, selling its services to the Byzantine Greeks. In the anarchy of Southern Italy at this epoch, when the decaying Empire of the East was relaxing its hold upon the Apulian provinces, when the Papacy was beginning to lift up its head after the ignominy of Theodora and Marozia, and the Lombard power was slowly dissolving upon its ill-established foundations, the Norman adventurers pursued a policy which, however changeful, was invariably self-advantageous. On whatever side they fought, they took care that the profits of war should accrue to their own colony. Quarrel as they might among themselves, they were always found at one against a common foe. And such was their reputation in the field, that the hardiest soldiers errant of all nations joined their standard. Thus it fell out that when Ardoin and his Normans had helped Maniaces to wrest the eastern districts of Sicily from

the Moors, they returned, upon an insult offered by the Greek general, to extend the right hand of fellowship to Rainulf and his Normans of Aversa. 'Why should you stay here like a rat in his hole, when with our help you might rule those fertile plains, expelling the women in armour who keep guard over them?' The agreement of Ardoïn and Rainulf formed the basis of the future Norman power. Their companies joined forces. Melfi was chosen as the centre of their federal government. The united Norman colony elected twelve chiefs or counts of equal authority; and henceforth they thought only of consolidating their ascendancy over the effete races which had hitherto pretended to employ their arms. The genius of their race and age, however, was unfavourable to federations. In a short time the ablest man among them, the true king, by right of personal vigour and mental cunning, showed himself. It was at this point that the house of Hauteville rose to the altitude of its romantic destiny. William Iron Arm was proclaimed Count of Apulia. Two of his brothers succeeded him in the same dignity. His half-brother, Robert Guiscard, imprisoned one Pope,¹ Leo IX., and wrested from another, Nicholas II., the title of Duke of Apulia and Calabria. By the help of his youngest brother, Roger, he gradually completed the conquest of Italy below the Tiber, and then addressed himself to the task of subduing Sicily. The Papacy, incapable of opposing the military vigour of the Northmen, was distracted between jealousy of their growing importance and desire to utilise them for its own advantage.² The temptation to employ these filial

¹ The Normans were lucky in getting hold of Popes. King Roger caught Innocent II. at San Germano in 1139, and got from him the confirmation of all his titles.

² Even the great Hildebrand wavered in his policy toward Robert Guiscard. Having raised an army by the help of the Countess Matilda in 1074, he excommunicated Robert and made war against him. Robert

pirates as a catspaw for restoring Sicily to the bosom of the Church, was too strong to be resisted. In spite of many ebbs and flows of policy, the favour which the Popes accorded to the Normans gilded the might and cunning of the adventurers with the specious splendour of acknowledged sanctity. The time might come for casting off these powerful allies and adding their conquests to the patrimony of S. Peter. Meanwhile it costs nothing to give away what does not belong to one, particularly when by doing so a title to the same is gradually formed. So the Popes reckoned. Robert and Roger went forth with banners blessed by Rome to subjugate the island of the Greek and Moor.

The honours of this conquest, paralleled for boldness only by the achievements of Cortes and Pizarro, belong to Roger. It is true that since the fall of the Kelbite dynasty Sicily had been shaken by anarchy and despotism, by the petty quarrels of princes and party leaders, and to some extent also by the invasion of Maniaces. Yet on the approach of Roger with a handful of Norman knights, 'the island was guarded,' to quote Gibbon's energetic phrase, 'to the water's edge.' For some years he had to content himself with raids and harrying excursions, making Messina, which he won from the Moors by the aid of their Christian serfs and vassals, the basis of his operations, and retiring from time to time across the Faro

proved more than his match in force and craft; and Hildebrand had to confirm his title as duke, and designate him Knight of S. Peter in 1080. When Robert drove the Emperor Henry IV. from Rome, and burned the city of the Cœlian, Hildebrand retired with his terrible defender to Salerno, and died there in 1085. Robert and both Rogers were good sons of the Church, deserving the titles of 'Terror of the faithless,' 'Sword of the Lord drawn from the scabbard of Sicily,' as long as they were suffered to pursue their own schemes of empire. They respected the Pope's person and his demesne of Benevento; they were largely liberal in donations to churches and abbeys. But they did not suffer their piety to interfere with their ambition.

with booty to Reggio. The Mussulmans had never thoroughly subdued the north-eastern highlands of Sicily. Satisfied with occupying the whole western and southern sections of the island, with planting their government firmly at Palermo, destroying Syracuse, and establishing a military fort on the heights of Castro Giovanni, they had somewhat neglected the Christian populations of the Val Demone. Thus the key to Sicily upon the Italian side fell into the hands of the invaders. From Messina Roger advanced by Rametta and Centorbi to Troina, a hill-town raised high above the level of the sea, within view of the solemn blue-black pyramid of Etna. There he planted a garrison in 1062, two years after his first incursion into the island. The interval had been employed in marches and countermarches, descents upon the vale of Catania, and hurried expeditions as far as Girgenti, on the southern coast. One great battle is recorded beneath the walls of Castro Giovanni, when six hundred Norman knights, so say the chroniclers, engaged with fifteen thousand of the Arabian chivalry and one hundred thousand foot soldiers. However great the exaggeration of these numbers, it is certain that the Christians fought at fearful odds that day, and that all the eloquence of Roger, who wrought on their fanaticism in his speech before the battle, was needed to raise their courage to the sticking-point. The scene of the great rout of Saracens which followed, is in every respect memorable. Castro Giovanni, the old Enna of the Greeks and Romans, stands on the top of a precipitous mountain, two thousand feet above a plain which waves with corn. A sister height, Calascibetta, raised nearly to an equal altitude, keeps ward over the same valley; and from their summits the whole of Sicily is visible. Here in old days Demeter from her rock-built temple could survey vast tracts of hill and dale, breaking downwards to the sea and undulating everywhere with harvest.

The much praised lake and vale of Enna¹ are now a desolate sulphur district, void of beauty, with no flowers to tempt Proserpine. Yet the landscape is eminently noble because of its breadth—bare naked hills stretching in every direction to the sea that girdles Sicily—peak rising above peak and town-capped eyrie over eyrie—while Etna, wreathed with snow, and purple with the peculiar colour of its coal-black lava seen through light-irradiated air, sleeps far off beneath a crown of clouds. Upon the cornfields in the centre of this landscape the multitudes of the Infidels were smitten hip and thigh by the handful of Christian warriors. Yet the victory was by no means a decisive one. The Saracens swarmed round the Norman fortress of Troina; where, during a severe winter, Roger and his young wife, Judith of Evreux, whom he had loved in Normandy, and who journeyed to marry him amid the din of battles, had but one cloak to protect them both from the cold. The traveller, who even in April has experienced the chill of a high-set Sicilian village, will not be

¹ Cicero's description of Enna is still accurate: 'Enna is placed in a very lofty and exposed situation, at the top of which is a tableland and never-failing supply of springs. The whole site is cut off from access, and precipitous.' But when he proceeds to say, 'many groves and lakes surround it and luxuriant flowers through all the year,' we cannot follow him. The only quality which Enna has not lost is the impregnable nature of its cliffs. A few poplars and thorns are all that remain of its forests. Did we not know that the myth of Demeter and Persephone was a poem of seed-time and harvest, we might be tempted, while sitting on the crags of Castro Giovanni and looking toward the lake, to fancy that in old days a village dependent upon Enna, and therefore called her daughter, might have occupied the site of the lake, and that this village might have been withdrawn into the earth by the volcanic action which produced the cavity. Then people would have said that Demeter had lost Persephone and sought her vainly through all the cities of Sicily: and if this happened in spring Persephone might well have been thought to have been gathering flowers at the time when Hades took her to himself. So easy and yet so dangerous is it to rationalise a legend.

inclined to laugh at the hardships revealed by this little incident. Yet the Normans, one and all, were stanch. A victory over their assailants in the spring gave them courage to push their arms as far as the river Himera and beyond the Simeto, while a defeat of fifty thousand Saracens by four hundred Normans at Cerami opened the way at last to Palermo. Reading of these engagements, we are led to remember how Gelon smote his Punic foes upon the Himera, and Timoleon arrayed Greeks by the ten against Carthaginians by the thousand on the Crimisus. The battlefields are scarcely altered; the combatants are as unequally matched, and represent analogous races. It is still the combat of a few heroic Europeans against the hordes of Asia. In the battle of Cerami it is said that S. George fought visibly on horseback before the Christian band, like that wide-winged chivalrous archangel whom Spinello Aretino painted beside Sant' Efeso in the press of men upon the walls of the Pisan Campo Santo.

The capture of Palermo cost the Normans another eight years, part of which was spent according to their national tactics in plundering expeditions, part in the subjugation of Catania and other districts, part in the blockade of the capital by sea and land. After the fall of Palermo, it only remained for Roger to reduce isolated cities—Taormina, Syracuse,¹ Girgenti, and Castro Giovanni—to his sway. The last-named and strongest hold of the Saracens fell into his hands by the treason of Ibn-Hamûd in 1087, and thus, after thirty years' continual effort, the two brothers were at last able to divide the island between them. The lion's share, as was due, fell to Roger, who styled himself Great Count of Sicily and Calabria. In 1098, Urban II., a politician of the school of

¹ In this siege, as in that of the Athenians, and of the Saracens 878 A.D., decisive engagements took place in the great harbour.

Cluny, who well understood the scope of Hildebrand's plan for subjecting Europe to the Court of Rome, rewarded Roger for his zeal in the service of the Church with the title of Hereditary Apostolical Legate. The Great Count was now on a par with the most powerful monarchs of Europe. In riches he exceeded all; so that he was able to wed one daughter to the King of Hungary, another to Conrad, King of Italy, a third to Raimond, Count of Provence and Toulouse, dowering them all with imperial munificence.

Hale and vigorous, his life was prolonged through a green old age until his seventieth year; when he died in 1101, he left two sons by his third wife, Adelaide. Roger, the younger of the two, destined to succeed his father, and (on the death of his cousin, William, Duke of Apulia, in 1127) to unite South Italy and Sicily under one crown, was only four years old at the death of the Great Count. Inheriting all the valour and intellectual qualities of his family, he rose to even higher honour than his predecessors. In 1130 he assumed the style of King of Sicily, no doubt with the political purpose of impressing his Mussulman subjects; and nine years later, when he took Innocent captive at San Germano, he forced from the half-willing pontiff a confirmation of this title as well as the investiture of Apulia, Calabria, and Capua. The extent of his sway is recorded in the line engraved upon his sword:—

Appulus et Calaber Siculus mihi servit et Afer.

King Roger died in 1154, and bequeathed his kingdoms to his son William, surnamed the Bad; who in his turn left them to a William, called the Good, in 1166. The second William died in 1189, transmitting his possessions by will to Constance, wife of the Suabian emperor. These two Williams, the last of the Hauteville monarchs of Sicily, were not altogether unworthy of their Norman origin. William the Bad could rouse

himself from the sloth of his seraglio to head an army; William the Good, though feeble in foreign policy, and no general, administered the state with clemency and wisdom.

Sicily under the Normans offered the spectacle of a singularly hybrid civilisation. Christians and Northmen, adopting the habits and imbibing the culture of their Mussulman subjects, ruled a mixed population of Greeks, Arabs, Berbers, and Italians. The language of the princes was French; that of the Christians in their territory, Greek and Latin; that of their Mahommedan subjects, Arabic. At the same time the Scandinavian Sultans of Palermo did not cease to play an active part in the affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, of Europe. The children of the Vikings, though they spent their leisure in harems, exercised, as hereditary Legates of the Holy See, a peculiar jurisdiction in the Church of Sicily. They dispensed benefices to the clergy, and assumed the mitre and dalmatic, together with the sceptre and the crown, as symbols of their authority in Church as well as State. As a consequence of this confusion of nationalities in Sicily, we find French and English ecclesiastics¹ mingling at court with Moorish freedmen and Oriental odalisques, Apulian captains fraternising with Greek corsairs, Jewish physicians in attendance on the person of the prince, and Arabian poets eloquent in his praises. The very money with which Roger subsidised his Italian allies was stamped with Cuphic letters,² and there is

¹ The English Gualterio Offamilio, or Walter of the Mill, Archbishop of Palermo during the reign of William the Good, by his intrigues brought about the match between Constance and Henry VI. Richard Palmer at the same time was Bishop of Syracuse. Stephen des Rotrou, a Frenchman of the Counts of Perche, preceded Walter of the Mill in the Arch See of Palermo.

² Frederick Barbarossa's soldiers are said to have bidden the Romans: 'Take this German iron in change for Arab gold. This pay your master gives you, and this is how Franks win empire.'—*Amari*, vol. iii. p. 468.

reason to believe that the reproach against Frederick of being a false coiner arose from his adopting the Eastern device of plating copper pieces to pass for silver. The commander of Roger's navies and his chief minister of state was styled, according to Oriental usage, Emir or Ammiraglio. George of Antioch, who swept the shores of Africa, the Morea, and the Black Sea, in his service, was a Christian of the Greek Church, who had previously held an office of finance under Temin Prince of Mehdia. The workers in his silk factories were slaves from Thebes and Corinth. The pages of his palace were Sicilian or African eunuchs. His charters ran in Arabic as well as Greek and Latin. His jewellers engraved the rough gems of the Orient with Christian mottoes in Semitic characters.¹ His architects were Mussulmans who adapted their native style to the requirements of Christian ritual, and inscribed the walls of cathedrals with Catholic legends in the Cuphic language. The predominant characteristic of Palermo was Orientalism. Religious toleration was extended to the Mussulmans, so that the two creeds, Christian and Mahomedan, flourished side by side. The Saracens had their own quarters in the towns, their mosques and schools, and Cadis for the administration of petty justice. French and Italian women in Palermo adopted the Oriental fashions of dress. The administration of law and government was conducted on Eastern principles. In nothing had the Mussulmans shown greater genius than in their system of internal statecraft. Count Roger found a machinery of taxation in full working order, officers acquainted with the resources of the country, books and schedules con-

¹ The embroidered skullcap of Constance of Aragon, wife of Frederick II., in the sacristy of the cathedral at Palermo, is made of gold thread thickly studded with pearls and jewels—rough sapphires and carbuncles, among which may be noticed a red cornelian engraved in Arabic with this sentence, 'In Christ, God, I put my hope.'

structed on the principles of strictest accuracy, a whole bureaucracy, in fact, ready to his use. By applying this machinery he became the richest potentate in Europe, at a time when the northern monarchs were dependent upon feudal aids and precarious revenues from crown lands. In the same way, the Saracens bequeathed to the Normans the court system, which they in turn had derived from the princes of Persia and the example of Constantinople. Roger found it convenient to continue that organisation of pages, chamberlains, ushers, secretaries, viziers, and masters of the wardrobe, invested each with some authority of state according to his rank, which confined the administration of an Eastern kingdom to the walls of the palace.¹ At Palermo Europe saw the first instance of a court not wholly unlike that which Versailles afterwards became. The intrigues which endangered the throne and liberty of William the Bad, and which perplexed the policy of William the Good, were court-conspiracies of a kind common enough at Constantinople. In this court life men of letters and erudition played a first part three centuries before Petrarch taught the princes of Italy to respect the pen of a poet.

King Roger, of whom the court geographer Edrisi writes

¹ The Arabic title of *Kâid*, which originally was given to a subordinate captain of the guard, took a wide significance at the Norman Court. Latinised to *gaytus*, and Grecised under the form of *κάρτος*, it frequently occurs in chronicles and diplomas to denote a high minister of state. Matteo of Ajello, who exercised so powerful an influence over the policy of William the Good, heading the Mussulman and national party against the great ecclesiastics who were intriguing to draw Sicily into the entanglements of European diplomacy, was a *Kâid*. Matteo favoured the cause of Tancred, Walter of the Mill espoused that of the Germans, during the war of succession which followed upon William's death. The barons of the realm had to range themselves under these two leaders—to such an extent were the affairs of state in Sicily within the grasp of courtiers and churchmen.

that 'he did more sleeping than any other man waking,' was surrounded during his leisure moments, beneath the palm-groves of Favara, with musicians, historians, travellers, mathematicians, poets, and astrologers of Oriental breeding. At his command Ptolemy's Optics were translated into Latin from the Arabic. The prophecies of the Erythrean Sibyl were rendered accessible in the same way. His respect for the occult sciences was proved by his disinterring the bones of Virgil from their resting-place at Posilippo, and placing them in the Castel dell' Uovo in order that he might have access through necromancy to the spirit of the Roman wizard. It may be remembered in passing, that Palermo in one of her mosques already held suspended between earth and air the supposed relics of Aristotle. Such were the saints of modern culture in its earliest dawning. While Venice was robbing Alexandria of the body of S. Mark, Palermo and Naples placed themselves beneath the protection of a philosopher and a poet. But Roger's greatest literary work was the compilation of a treatise of universal geography. Fifteen years were devoted to the task; and the manuscript, in Arabic, drawn up by the philosopher Edrisi, appeared only six weeks before the king's death in 1154. This book, called 'The Book of Roger, or the Delight of whoso loves to make the Circuit of the World,' was based upon the previous labours of twelve geographers, classical and Mussulman. But aiming at greater accuracy than could be obtained by a merely literary compilation, Roger caused pilgrims, travellers, and merchants of all countries to be assembled for conference and examination before him. Their accounts were sifted and collated. Edrisi held the pen while Roger questioned. Measurements and distances were carefully compared; and a vast silver disc was constructed, on which all the seas, islands, continents, plains, rivers, mountain ranges, cities, roads, and harbours of the

known world were delineated. The text supplied an explanatory description of this map, with tables of the products, habits, races, religions, and qualities, both physical and moral, of all climates. The precious metal upon which the map was drawn proved its ruin, and the Geography remained in the libraries of Arab scholars. Yet this was one of the first great essays of practical exploration and methodical statistic, to which the genius of the Norseman and the Arab each contributed a quota. The Arabians, by their primitive nomadic habits, by the necessities of their system of taxation, by their predilection for astrology, by their experience as pilgrims, merchants, and poets errant, were specially qualified for the labour of geographical investigation. Roger supplied the unbounded curiosity and restless energy of his Scandinavian temper, the kingly comprehensive intellect of his race, and the authority of a prince who was powerful enough to compel the service of qualified collaborators.

The architectural works of the Normans in Palermo reveal the same ascendancy of Arab culture. San Giovanni degli Eremiti, with its low white rounded domes, is nothing more or less than a little mosque adapted to the rites of Christians.¹ The country palaces of the Zisa and the Cuba, built by the two Williams, retain their ancient Moorish character. Standing beneath the fretted arches of the hall of the Zisa, through which a fountain flows within a margin of carved marble, and looking on the landscape from its open porch, we only need to reconstruct in fancy the green gardens and orange-groves, where fair-haired Normans whiled away their hours among black-eyed odalisques and graceful singing boys from Persia. Amid a wild tangle of olive and lemon trees overgrown with scarlet passion-flowers, the pavilion of the Cubola, built of

¹ Tradition asserts that the tocsin of this church gave the signal in Palermo to the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers.

hewn stone and open at each of its four sides, still stands much as it stood when William II. paced through flowers from his palace of the Cuba, to enjoy the freshness of the evening by the side of its fountain. The views from all these Saracenic villas over the fruitful valley of the Golden Horn, and the turrets of Palermo, and the mountains and the distant sea, are ineffably delightful. When the palaces were new—when the gilding and the frescoes still shone upon their honeycombed ceilings, when their mosaics glittered in noonday twilight, and their amber-coloured masonry was set in shade of pines and palms, and the cool sound of rivulets made music in their courts and gardens, they must have well deserved their Arab titles of ‘ Sweet Waters ’ and ‘ The Glory ’ and ‘ The Paradise of Earth.’

But the true splendour of Palermo, that which makes this city one of the most glorious of the south, is to be sought in its churches—in the mosaics of the Cappella Palatina founded by King Roger, in the vast aisles and cloisters of Monreale built by King William the Good at the instance of his Chancellor Matteo,¹ in the Cathedral of Palermo begun by Offamilio, and in the Martorana dedicated by George the Admiral. These triumphs of ecclesiastical architecture, none the less splendid because they cannot be reduced to rule or assigned to any single style, were the work of Saracen builders assisted by Byzantine, Italian, and Norman craftsmen. The genius of Latin Christianity determined the basilica shape of the Cathedral of Monreale. Its bronze doors were wrought by smiths of Trani and Pisa. Its walls were incrustated with the mosaics of Constantinople. The woodwork of its roof, and the emblazoned patterns in porphyry and serpentine and glass and smalto, which cover its whole surface, were designed

¹ Matteo of Ajello induced William to found an archbishopric at Monreale in order to spite his rival Offamilio.

by Oriental decorators. Norman sculptors added their dog-tooth and chevron to the mouldings of its porches; Greeks, Frenchmen, and Arabs may have tried their skill in turn upon the multitudinous ornaments of its cloister capitals. 'The like of which church,' said Lucius III. in 1182, 'hath not been constructed by any king even from ancient times, and such an one as must compel all men to admiration.' These words remain literally and emphatically true. Other cathedrals may surpass that of Monreale in sublimity, simplicity, bulk, strength, or unity of plan. None can surpass it in the strange romance with which the memory of its many artificers invests it. None again can exceed it in richness and glory, in the gorgeousness of a thousand decorative elements subservient to one controlling thought. 'It is evident,' says Fergusson in his 'History of Architecture,' 'that all the architectural features in the building were subordinate in the eyes of the builders to the mosaic decorations, which cover every part of the interior, and are in fact the glory and the pride of the edifice, and alone entitle it to rank among the finest of mediæval churches.' The whole of the Christian history is depicted in this series of mosaics; but on first entering, one form alone compels attention. The semi-dome of the eastern apse above the high altar is entirely filled with a gigantic half-length figure of Christ. He raises His right hand to bless, and with His left holds an open book on which is written in Greek and Latin, 'I am the Light of the world.' His face is solemn and severe, rather than mild or piteous; and round His nimbus runs the legend *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ*. Below Him on a smaller scale are ranged the archangels and the mother of the Lord, who holds the child upon her knees. Thus Christ appears twice upon this wall, once as the Omnipotent Wisdom, the Word by whom all things were made, and once as God deigning to assume a

shape of flesh and dwell with men. The magnificent image of supreme Deity seems to fill with a single influence and to dominate the whole building. The house with all its glory is His. He dwells there like Pallas in her Parthenon or Zeus in his Olympian temple. To left and right over every square inch of the cathedral blaze mosaics, which portray the story of God's dealings with the human race from the Creation downwards, together with those angelic beings and saints who symbolise each in his own degree some special virtue granted to mankind. The walls of the fane are therefore an open book of history, theology, and ethics for all men to read.

The superiority of mosaics over fresco as an architectural adjunct on this gigantic scale is apparent at a glance in Monreale. Permanency of splendour and glowing richness of tone are all on the side of the mosaics. Their true rival is painted glass. The jewelled churches of the south are constructed for the display of coloured surfaces illuminated by sunlight falling on them from narrow windows, just as those of the north—Rheims, for example, or Le Mans—are built for the transmission of light through a variegated medium of transparent hues. The painted windows of a northern cathedral find their proper counterpart in the mosaics of the south. The Gothic architect strove to obtain the greatest amount of translucent surface. The Byzantine builder directed his attention to securing just enough light for the illumination of his glistening walls. The radiance of the northern church was similar to that of flowers or sunset clouds or jewels. The glory of the southern temple was that of dusky gold and gorgeous needlework. The north needed acute brilliancy as a contrast to external greyness. The south found rest from the glare and glow of noonday in these sombre splendours. Thus Christianity, both of the south and of the north, decked

her shrines with colour. Not so the Paganism of Hellas. With the Greeks, colour, though used in architecture, was severely subordinated to sculpture; toned and modified to a calculated harmony with actual nature, it did not, as in a Christian church, create a world beyond the world, a paradise of supersensual ecstasy, but remained within the limits of the known. Light falling upon carved forms of gods and heroes, bathing clear-cut columns and sharp basreliefs in simple lustre, was enough for the Phœbean rites of Hellas. Though we know that red and blue and green and gilding were employed to accentuate the mouldings of Greek temples, yet neither the gloomy glory of mosaics nor the gemmed fretwork of storied windows was needed to attune the souls of Hellenic worshippers to devotion.

Less vast than Monreale, but even more beautiful, because the charm of mosaic increases in proportion as the surface it covers may be compared to the interior of a casket, is the Cappella Palatina of the royal palace in Palermo. Here, again, the whole design and ornament are Arabo-Byzantine. Saracenic pendentives with Cuphic legends incrust the richly painted ceiling of the nave. The roofs of the apses and the walls are coated with mosaics, in which the Bible history, from the dove that brooded over Chaos to the lives of S. Peter and S. Paul, receives a grand though formal presentation. Beneath the mosaics are ranged slabs of grey marble, edged and divided with delicate patterns of inserted glass, resembling drapery with richly embroidered fringes. The floor is inlaid with circles of serpentine and porphyry encased in white marble, and surrounded by winding bands of Alexandrine work. Some of these patterns are restricted to the five tones of red, green, white, black, and pale yellow. Others add turquoise blue, and emerald, and scarlet, and gold. Not a square inch of the surface—floor, roof, walls, or

cupola—is free from exquisite gemmed work of precious marbles. A candelabrum of fanciful design, combining lions devouring men and beasts, cranes, flowers, and winged genii, stands by the pulpit. Lamps of chased silver hang from the roof. The cupola blazes with gigantic archangels, stationed in a ring beneath the supreme figure and face of Christ. Some of the Ravenna churches are more historically interesting, perhaps, than this little masterpiece of the mosaic art. But none is so rich in detail and lustrous in effect. It should be seen at night, when the lamps are lighted in a pyramid around the sepulchre of the dead Christ on Holy Thursday, when partial gleams strike athwart the tawny gold of the arches, and fall upon the profile of a priest declaiming in voluble Italian to a listening crowd.

Such are a few of the monuments which still remain to show of what sort was the mixed culture of Normans, Saracens, Italians, and Greeks at Palermo. In scenes like these the youth of Frederick II. was passed :—for at the end, while treating of Palermo, we are bound to think again of the Emperor who inherited from his German father the ambition of the Hohenstauffens, and from his Norman mother the fair fields and Oriental traditions of Sicily. The strange history of Frederick—an intellect of the eighteenth century born out of date, a cosmopolitan spirit in the age of Saint Louis, the crusader who conversed with Moslem sages on the threshold of the Holy Sepulchre, the Sultan of Lucera¹ who persecuted

¹ Charles of Anjou gave this nickname to Manfred, who carried on the Siculo-Norman tradition. Frederick, it may here be mentioned, had transferred his Saracen subjects of the vale of Mazara to Lucera in the Capitanate. He employed them as trusty troops in his warfare with the Popes and preaching friars. Nothing shows the confusion of the century in matters ecclesiastical and religious more curiously than that Frederick, who conducted a crusade and freed the Holy Sepulchre, should not only have tolerated the religion of Mussulmans, but also

Paterini while he respected the superstition of Saracens, the anointed successor of Charlemagne, who carried his harem with him to the battlefields of Lombardy, and turned Infidels loose upon the provinces of Christ's Vicar—would be inexplicable, were it not that Palermo still reveals in all her monuments the *genius loci* which gave spiritual nurture to this phoenix among kings. From his Mussulman teachers Frederick derived the philosophy to which he gave a vogue in Europe. From his Arabian predecessors he learnt the arts of internal administration and finance, which he transmitted to the princes of Italy. In imitation of Oriental courts, he adopted the practice of verse composition, which gave the first impulse to Italian literature. His Grand Vizier, Piero Delle Vigne, set an example to Petrarch, not only by composing the first sonnet in Italian, but also by showing to what height a low-born secretary versed in art and law might rise. In a word, the zeal for liberal studies, the luxury of life, the religious indifferentism, the bureaucratic system of state government, which mark the age of the Italian Renaissance, found their first manifestation within the bosom of the Middle Ages in Frederick. While our King John was signing Magna Charta, Frederick had already lived long enough to comprehend, at least in outline, what is meant by the spirit of modern culture.¹ It is true that the so-called Renaissance followed slowly and by tortuous paths upon the death of Frederick. The Church obtained a complete victory over his family, and succeeded in extinguishing the civilisation of Sicily. Yet the fame of the Emperor who transmitted

have armed them against the Head of the Church. What we are apt to regard as religious questions really belonged at that period to the sphere of politics.

¹ It is curious to note that in this year 1215, the date of Magna Charta, Frederick took the Cross at Aix-la-Chapelle.

questions of sceptical philosophy to Arab sages, who conversed familiarly with men of letters, who loved splendour and understood the arts of refined living, survived both long and late in Italy. His power, his wealth, his liberality of soul and lofty aspirations, formed the theme of many a tale and poem. Dante places him in hell among the heresiarchs; and truly the splendour of his supposed infidelity found for him a goodly following. Yet Dante dated the rise of Italian literature from the blooming period of the Sicilian court. Frederick's unorthodoxy proved no drawback to his intellectual influence. More than any other man of mediæval times he contributed, if only as the memory of a mighty name, to the progress of civilised humanity.

Let us take leave both of Frederick and of Palermo, that centre of converging influences which was his cradle, in the cathedral where he lies gathered to his fathers. This church, though its rich sunbrowned yellow¹ reminds one of the tone of Spanish buildings, is like nothing one has seen elsewhere. Here even more than at Monreale the eye is struck with a fusion of styles. The western towers are grouped into something like the clustered sheafs of the Caen churches: the windows present Saracenic arches: the southern porch is covered with foliated incrustations of a late and decorative Gothic style: the exterior of the apse combines Arabic inlaid patterns of black and yellow with the Greek honeysuckle: the western door adds Norman dog-tooth and chevron to the

¹ Nearly all cities have their own distinctive colour. That of Venice is a pearly white suggestive of every hue in delicate abeyance, and that of Florence is a sober brown. Palermo displays a rich yellow ochre passing at the deepest into orange, and at the lightest into primrose. This is the tone of the soil, of sun-stained marble, and of the rough ashlar masonry of the chief buildings. Palermo has none of the glaring whiteness of Naples, nor yet of that particoloured gradation of tints which adds gaiety to the grandeur of Genoa.

Saracenic billet. Nowhere is any one tradition firmly followed. The whole wavers and yet is beautiful—like the immature eclecticism of the culture which Frederick himself endeavoured to establish in his southern kingdoms. Inside there is no such harmony of blended voices : all the strange tongues, which speak together on the outside, making up a music in which the far North, and ancient Byzance, and the delicate East sound each a note, are hushed. The frigid silence of the Palladian style reigns there—simple indeed and dignified, but lifeless as the century in which it flourished.

Yet there, in a side chapel near the western door, stand the porphyry sarcophagi which shrine the bones of the Hautevilles and their representatives. There sleeps King Roger—‘*Dux strenuus et primus Rex Siciliæ*’—with his daughter Constance in her purple chest beside him. Henry VI. and Frederick II. and Constance of Aragon complete the group, which surpasses for interest all sepulchral monuments—even the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona—except only, perhaps, the statues of the nave of Innsbruck. Very sombre and stately are these porphyry resting-places of princes born in the purple, assembled here from lands so distant—from the craggy heights of Hohenstauffen, from the green orchards of Cotentin, from the dry hills of Aragon. They sleep, and the centuries pass by. Rude hands break open the granite lids of their sepulchres, to find tresses of yellow hair and fragments of imperial mantles, embroidered with the hawks and stags the royal hunter loved. The church in which they lie changes with the change of taste in architecture and the manners of successive ages. But the huge stone arks remain unmoved, guarding their freight of mouldering dust beneath gloomy canopies of stone that temper the sunlight as it streams from the chapel windows.

SYRACUSE AND GIRGENTI

THE traveller in Sicily is constantly reminded of classical history and literature. While tossing, it may be, at anchor in the port of Trapani, and wondering when the tedious Libeccio will release him, he must perforce remember that here Æneas instituted the games for Anchises. Here Mnestheus and Gyas and Sergestus and Cloanthus raced their galleys: on yonder little isle the Centaur struck; and that was the rock which received the dripping Menœtes:—

Illum et labentem Teucri et risere natantem,
Et salsos rident revomentem pectore fluctus.

Or crossing a broken bridge at night in the lumbering diligence, guarded by infantry with set bayonets, and wondering on which side of the ravine the brigands are in ambush, he suddenly calls to mind that this torrent was the ancient Halycus, the border between Greeks and Carthaginians, established of old, and ratified by Timoleon after the battle of the Crimisis. Among the bare grey hills of Segeste his thoughts revert to that strange story told by Herodotus of Philippus, the young soldier of Crotona, whose beauty was so great, that when the Segesteans found him slain among their foes, they raised the corpse and burned it on a pyre of honour, and built a hero's temple over the urn that held his ashes. The first sight of Etna makes us cry with Theocritus, *Αἴττω*

μᾶτερ ἐμά . . . πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα. The solemn heights of Castro Giovanni bring lines of Ovid to our lips :—

Haud procul Hennæis lacus est a mœnibus altæ
 Nomine Pergus aquæ. Non illo plura Caystros
 Carmina cygnorum labentibus audit in undis.
 Silva coronat aquas, cingens latus omne ; suisque
 Frondibus ut velo Phœbeos summovet ignes.
 Frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus humida flores.
 Perpetuum ver est.

We look indeed in vain for the leafy covert and the purple flowers that tempted Proserpine. The place is barren now : two solitary cypress-trees mark the road which winds downwards from a desolate sulphur mine, and the lake is clearly the crater of an extinct volcano. Yet the voices of old poets are not mute. ‘The rich Virgilian rustic measure’ recalls a long-since buried past. Even among the wavelets of the Faro we remember Homer, scanning the shore if haply somewhere yet may linger the wild fig-tree which saved Ulysses from the whirlpool of Charybdis. At any rate we cannot but exclaim with Goethe, ‘Now all these coasts, gulfs, and creeks, islands and peninsulas, rocks and sand-banks, wooded hills, soft meadows, fertile fields, neat gardens, hanging grapes, cloudy mountains, constant cheerfulness of plains, cliffs and ridges, and the surrounding sea, with such manifold variety are present in my mind ; now is the “Odyssey” for the first time become to me a living world.’

But rich as the whole of Sicily may be in classical associations, two places, Syracuse and Girgenti, are pre-eminent for the power of bringing the Greek past forcibly before us. Their interest is of two very different kinds. Girgenti still displays the splendour of temples placed upon a rocky cornice between sea and olive-groves. Syracuse has nothing to show but the scene of world-important actions. Yet the great deeds

recorded by Thucydides, the conflict between eastern and western Hellas which ended in the annihilation of the bright, brief, brilliant reality of Athenian empire, remain so clearly written on the hills and harbours and marshlands of Syracuse that no place in the world is topographically more memorable. The artist, whether architect, or landscape-painter, or poet, finds full enjoyment at Girgenti. The historian must be exacting indeed in his requirements if he is not satisfied with Syracuse.

What has become of Syracuse, 'the greatest of Greek cities and the fairest of all cities' even in the days of Cicero? Scarcely one stone stands upon another of all those temples and houses. The five towns which were included by the walls have now shrunk to the little island which the first settlers named Ortygia, where the sacred fountain of Arethusa seemed to their home-loving hearts to have followed them from Hellas.¹ Nothing survives but a few columns of Athene's temple built into a Christian church, with here and there the marble masonry of a bath or the Roman stonework of an amphitheatre. There are not even any mounds or deep deposits of rubble mixed with pottery to show here once a town had been.² *Etiam periere ruinæ.* The vast city, devastated for the last time by the Saracens in 878 A.D., has been reduced to dust and swept by the scirocco into the sea. This is the explanation of its utter ruin. The stone of Syracuse is friable and easily disintegrated. The petulant moist wind of the south-east corrodes its surface; and when it falls, it crumbles to

¹ The fountain of Arethusa, recently rescued from the washerwomen of Syracuse, is shut off from the Great Harbour by a wall and planted with papyrus. Taste has not been displayed in the bear-pit architecture of its circular enclosure.

² This is not strictly true of Achradina, where some *débris* may still be found worth excavating.

powder. Here, then, the elements have had their will unchecked by such sculptured granite as in Egypt resists the mounded sand of the desert, or by such marble colonnades as in Athens have calmly borne the insults of successive sieges. What was hewn out of the solid rock—the semicircle of the theatre, the street of the tombs with its deeply dented chariot-ruts, the gigantic quarries from which the material of the metropolis was scooped, the catacombs which burrow for miles underground—alone prove how mighty must have been the Syracuse of Dionysius. Truly ‘the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity.’ Standing on the beach of the Great Harbour or the Bay of Thapsus, we may repeat almost word by word Antipater’s solemn lament over Corinth :—

Where is thy splendour now, thy crown of towers,
 Thy beauty visible to all men’s eyes,
 The gold and silver of thy treasures,
 Thy temples of blest gods, thy woven bowers
 Where long-stoled ladies walked in tranquil hours,
 Thy multitudes like stars that crowd the skies ?
 All, all are gone. Thy desolation lies
 Bare to the night. The elemental powers
 Resume their empire : on this lonely shore
 Thy deathless Nereids, daughters of the sea,
 Wailing ’mid broken stones unceasingly,
 Like halcyons when the restless south winds roar,
 Sing the sad story of thy woes of yore :
 These plunging waves are all that’s left to thee.

Time, however, though he devours his children, cannot utterly destroy either the written record of illustrious deeds or the theatre of their enactment. Therefore, with Thucydides in hand, we may still follow the events of that Syracusan siege which decided the destinies of Greece, and by the fall of

Athens, raised Sparta, Macedonia, and finally Rome to the hegemony of the civilised world.

There are few students of Thucydides and Grote who would not be surprised by the small scale of the cliffs, and the gentle incline of Epipolæ—the rising ground above the town of Syracuse, upon the slope of which the principal operations of the Athenian siege took place.¹ Maps, and to some extent also the language of Thucydides, who talks of the *προσβάσεις*, or practicable approaches to Epipolæ, and the *κρημνοῖ*, or precipices by which it was separated from the plain, would lead one to suppose that the whole region was on each hand rocky and abrupt. In reality it is extremely difficult to distinguish the rising ground of Epipolæ upon the southern side from the plain, so very gradual is the line of ascent and so comparatively even is the rocky surface of the hill. Thucydides, in narrating the night attack of Demosthenes upon the lines of Gylippus (book vii. 43–45), lays stress upon the necessity of approaching Epipolæ from the western side by Euryalus, and again asserts that during the hurried retreat of the Athenians great numbers died by leaping from the cliffs, while still more had to throw away their armour. At this time the Athenian army was encamped upon the shore of the Great Harbour, and held trenches and a wall that stretched from that side at least halfway across Epipolæ. It seems therefore strange that, unless their movements were impeded by counterworks and lines of walls, of which we have no information, the troops of Demosthenes should not, at least in their retreat, have been able to pour down over the gentle

¹ Epipolæ is in shape a pretty regular isosceles triangle, of which the apex is Mongibellisi or Euryalus, and the base Achradina or the northern quarter of the ancient city. Thucydides describes it as *χωρίου ἀποκρήμνου τε καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως εὐθὺς κειμένου* . . . *ἐξήρτηται γὰρ τὸ ἄλλο χωρίον καὶ μέχρι τῆς πόλεως ἐπικλινές τέ ἐστι καὶ ἐπιφανὲς πᾶν εἶσω καὶ ὠνόμασται ὑπὸ τῶν Συρακοσίων διὰ τὸ ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ ἄλλου εἶναι* 'Επιπολαί (vi. 96).

descent of Epipolæ toward the Anapus, instead of returning to Euryâlus. Anyhow, we can scarcely discern cliffs of more than ten feet upon the southern slope of Epipolæ, nor can we understand why the Athenians should have been forced to take these in their line of retreat. There must have been some artificial defences of which we read nothing, and of which no traces now remain, but which were sufficient to prevent them from choosing their ground. Slight difficulties of this kind raise the question whether the wonderful clearness of Thucydides in detail was really the result of personal observation, or whether his graphic style enabled him to give the appearance of scrupulous accuracy. I incline to think that the author of the sixth and seventh books of the History must have visited Syracuse, and that if we could see his own map of Epipolæ, we should better be able to understand the difficulties of the backward night march of Demosthenes, by discovering that there was some imperative necessity for not descending, as seems natural, upon the open slope of the hill to the south. The position of Euryâlus at the extreme point called Mongibellisi is clear enough. Here the ground, which has been continually rising from the plateau of Achradina (the northern suburb of Syracuse), comes to an abrupt finish. Between Mongibellisi and the Belvedere hill beyond there is a deep depression, and the slope to Euryâlus either from the south or north is gradual. It was a gross piece of neglect on the part of Nikias not to have fortified this spot on his first investment of Epipolæ, instead of choosing Labdalum, which, wherever we may place it, must have been lower down the hill to the east. For Euryâlus is the key to Epipolæ. It was here that Nikias himself ascended in the first instance, and that afterwards he permitted Gylippus to enter and raise the siege, and lastly that Demosthenes, by overpowering the insufficient Syracusan guard, got at night within the lines of

the Spartan general. Thus the three most important movements of the siege were made upon Euryálus. Dionysius, when he enclosed Epipolæ with walls, recognised the value of the point, and fortified it with the castle which remains, and to which, as Colonel Leake believes, Archimedes, at the order of Hiero II., made subsequent additions. This castle is one of the most interesting Greek ruins extant. A little repair would make it even now a substantial place of defence, according to Greek tactics. Its deep foss is cut in the solid rock, and furnished with subterranean magazines for the storage of provisions. The three piles of solid masonry on which the drawbridge rested, still stand in the centre of this ditch. The oblique grand entrance to the foss descends by a flight of well-cut steps. The rock itself over which the fort was raised is honeycombed with excavated passages for infantry and cavalry, of different width and height, so that one sort can be assigned to mounted horsemen and another to foot soldiers. The trap-doors which led from these galleries into the fortress are provided with rests for ladders that could be let down to help a sallying force or drawn up to impede an advancing enemy. The inner court for stabled horses and the stations for the catapults are still in tolerable preservation. Thus the whole arrangement of the stronghold can be traced not dimly but distinctly. Being placed on the left side of the chief gate of Epipolæ, the occupants of the fort could issue to attack a foe advancing toward that gate in the rear. At the same time the subterranean galleries enabled them to pour out upon the other side, if the enemy had forced an entrance, while the minor passages and trap-doors provided a retreat in case the garrison were overpowered in one of their offensive operations. The view from Euryálus is extensive. To the left rises Etna, snowy, solitary, broadly vast, above the plain of Catania, the curving shore, Thapsus,

and the sea. Syracuse itself, a thin white line between the harbour and the open sea, a dazzling streak between two blues, terminates the slope of Epipolæ, and on the right hand stretch the marshes of Anapus rich with vines and hoary with olives.

By far the most interesting localities of Syracuse are the Great Harbour and the stone quarries. When the sluggish policy and faint heart of Nikias had brought the Athenians to the verge of ruin, when Gylippus had entered the besieged city, and Plemmyrium had been wrested from the invaders, and Demosthenes had failed in his attack upon Epipolæ, and the blockading trenches had been finally evacuated, no hope remained for the armament of Athens except only in retreat by water. They occupied a palisaded encampment upon the shore of the harbour, between the mouth of the Anapus and the city; whence they attempted to force their way with their galleys to the open sea. Hitherto the Athenians had been supreme upon their own element; but now the Syracusans adopted tactics suited to the narrow basin in which the engagements had to take place. Building their vessels with heavy beaks, they crushed the lighter craft of the Athenians, which had no room for flank movements and rapid evolutions. A victory was thus obtained by the Syracusan navy; the harbour was blockaded with chains by the order of Gylippus; the Athenians were driven back to their palisades upon the fever-haunted shore. Their only chance seemed to depend upon a renewal of the sea-fight in the harbour. The supreme moment arrived. What remained of the Athenian fleet, in numbers still superior to that of their enemies, steered straight for the mouth of the harbour. The Syracusans advanced from the naval stations of Ortygia to meet them. The shore was thronged with spectators, Syracusans tremulous with the expectation of a decisive success, Athenians on the tenter-

hooks of hope and dread. In a short time the harbour became a confused mass of clashing triremes; the water beaten into bloody surf by banks of oars; the air filled with shouts from the combatants and exclamations from the lookers-on: ὀλοφυρμός, βοή, νικῶντες, κρατούμενοι, ἄλλα ὅσα ἐν μεγάλῳ κινδύνῳ μέγα στρατόπεδον πολνειδῇ ἀναγκάζοιτο φθέγγεσθαι. Then after a struggle, in which desperation gave energy to the Athenians, and ambitious hope inspired their foes with more than wonted vigour, the fleet of the Athenians was finally overwhelmed. The whole scene can be reproduced with wonderful distinctness; for the low shores of Plemmyrium, the city of Ortygia, the marsh of Lysimeleia, the hills above the Anapus, and the distant dome of Etna, are the same as they were upon that memorable day. Nothing has disappeared except the temple of Zeus Olympius and the buildings of Temenitis.

What followed upon the night of that defeat is less easily realised. Thucydides, however, by one touch reveals the depth of despair to which the Athenians had sunk. They neglected to rescue the bodies of their dead from the Great Harbour, or to ask for a truce, according to hallowed Greek usage, in order that they might perform the funeral rites. To such an extent was the army demoralised. Meanwhile within the city the Syracusans kept high festival, honouring their patron Herakles, upon whose day it happened that the battle had been fought. Nikias neglected this opportunity of breaking up his camp and retiring unmolested into the interior of the island. When after the delay of two nights and a day he finally began to move, the Syracusans had blockaded the roads. How his own division capitulated by the blood-stained banks of the Asinarus after a six days' march of appalling misery, and how that of Demosthenes surrendered in the olive-field of Polyzelus, is too well known.

One of the favourite excursions from modern Syracuse takes the traveller in a boat over the sandy bar of the Anapus, beneath the old bridge which joined the Helorine road to the city, and up the river to its junction with the Cyane. This is the ground traversed by the army first in their attempted flight and then in their return as captives to Syracuse. Few, perhaps, who visit the spot, think as much of that last act in a world-historical tragedy, as of the picturesque compositions made by arundo donax, castor-oil plant, yellow flags, and papyrus, on the river-banks and promontories. Like miniature palm-groves these water-weeds stand green and golden against the bright blue sky, feathering above the boat which slowly pushes its way through clinging reeds. The huge red oxen of Sicily in the marsh on either hand toss their spreading horns and canter off knee-deep in ooze. Then comes the fountain of Cyane, a broad round well of water, thirty feet in depth, but quite clear, so that you can see the pebbles at the bottom and fishes swimming to and fro among the weeds. Papyrus plants edge the pool; thick and tufted, they are exactly such as one sees carved or painted upon Egyptian architecture of the Ptolemaic period.

With Thucydides still in hand, before quitting Syracuse we must follow the Athenian captives to their prison-grave. The Latomia de' Cappuccini is a place which it is impossible to describe in words, and of which no photographs give any notion. Sunk to the depth of a hundred feet below the level of the soil, with sides perpendicular and in many places as smooth as though the chisel had just passed over them, these vast excavations produce the impression of some huge subterranean gallery, widening here and there into spacious halls, the whole of which has been unroofed and opened to the air of heaven. It is a solemn and romantic labyrinth, where no wind blows rudely, and where orange-trees shoot

upward luxuriantly to meet the light. The wild fig bursts from the living rock, mixed with lentisk-shrubs and pendent caper-plants. Old olives split the masses of fallen cliff with their tough, snakelike, slowly corded and compacted roots. Thin flames of pomegranate-flowers gleam amid foliage of lustrous green; and lemons drop unheeded from femininely fragile branches. There too the ivy hangs in long festoons, waving like tapestry to the breath of stealthy breezes; while under foot is a tangle of acanthus, thick curling leaves of glossiest green, surmounted by spikes of dull lilac blossoms. Wedges and columns and sharp teeth of the native rock rear themselves here and there in the midst of the open spaces to the sky, worn fantastically into notches and saws by the action of scirocco. A light yellow calcined by the sun to white is the prevailing colour of the quarries. But in shady places the limestone takes a curious pink tone of great beauty, like the interior of some sea-shells. The reflected lights too, and half-shadows in their scooped-out chambers, make a wonderful natural chiaroscuro. The whole scene is now more picturesque in a sublime and grandiose style than forbidding. There is even one spot planted with magenta-coloured mesembrianthemums of dazzling brightness; and the air is loaded with the drowsy perfume of lemon-blossoms. Yet this is the scene of a great agony. This garden was once the Gethsemane of a nation, where 9000 free men of the proudest city of Greece were brought by an unexampled stroke of fortune to slavery, shame, and a miserable end. Here they dwindled away, worn out by wounds, disease, thirst, hunger, heat by day and cold by night, heart-sickness, and the insufferable stench of putrefying corpses. The pupils of Socrates, the admirers of Euripides, the orators of the Pnyx, the athletes of the Lyceum, lovers and comrades and philosophers, died here like dogs; and the dames of Syracuse stood doubtless on those parapets

above, and looked upon them like wild beasts. What the Gorgo of Theocritus might have said to her friend Praxinoë on the occasion would be the subject for an idyll *à la* Brown-ing! How often, pining in those great glaring pits, which were not then curtained with ivy or canopied by olive-trees, must the Athenians have thought with vain remorse of their own Rhamnusian Nemesis, the goddess who held scales adverse to the hopes of men, and bore the legend 'Be not lifted up'! How often must they have watched the dawn walk forth fire-footed upon the edge of those bare crags, or the stars slide from east to west across the narrow space of sky! How they must have envied the unfettered clouds sailing in liquid ether, or traced the far flight of hawk and swallow, sighing, 'Oh that I too had the wings of a bird!' The weary eyes turned upwards found no change or respite, save what the frost of night brought to the fire of day, and the burning sun to the pitiless cold constellations.

A great painter, combining Doré's power over space and distance with the distinctness of Flaxman's design and the colouring of Alma Tadema, might possibly realise this agony of the Athenian captives in the stone quarries. The time of day chosen for the picture should be full noon, with its glare of light and sharply defined vertical shadows. The crannies in the straight sides of the quarry should here and there be tufted with a few dusty creepers and wild fig-trees. On the edge of the sky-line stand parties of Syracusan citizens with their wives and children, shaded by umbrellas, richly dressed, laughing and triumphing over the misery beneath. In the full foreground there are placed two figures. A young Athenian has just died of fever. His body lies stretched along the ground, the head resting on a stone, and the face turned to the sky. Beside him kneels an older warrior, sunburned and dry with thirst, but full as yet of vigour. He stares with

wide despair-smitten eyes straight out, as though he had lately been stretched upon the corpse, but had risen at the sound of movement, or some supposed word of friends close by. His bread lies untasted near him, and the half-pint of water—his day's portion—has been given to bathe the forehead of his dying friend. They have stood together through the festival of leave-taking from Peiræus, through the battles of Epipolæ, through the retreat and the slaughter at the passage of the Asinarus. But now it has come to this, and death has found the younger. Perhaps the friend beside him remembers some cool wrestling-ground in far-off Athens, or some procession up the steps of the Acropolis, where first they met. Anyhow his fixed gaze now shows that he has passed in thought at least beyond the hell around him. Not far behind should be ranged groups of haggard men, with tattered clothes and dulled or tigerish eyes, some dignified, some broken down by grief; while here and there newly fallen corpses, and in one hideous corner a great heap of abandoned dead, should point the ghastly words of Thucydides: *τῶν νεκρῶν ὁμοῦ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ξυννετημένων*.

Every landscape has some moment of its own at which it should be seen for the first time. Mediæval cities, with their narrow streets and solemn spires, demand the twilight of a summer night. Mediterranean islands show their best in the haze of afternoon, when sea and sky and headland are bathed in aërial blue, and the mountains seem to be made of transparent amethyst. The first sight of the Alps should be taken at sunset from some point of vantage, like the terrace at Berne, or the castle walls of Salzburg. If these fortunate moments be secured, all after knowledge of locality and detail serves to fortify and deepen the impression of picturesque harmony. The mind has then conceived a leading thought, which gives ideal unity to scattered memories and invests the

crude reality with an æsthetic beauty. The lucky moment for the landscape of Girgenti is half an hour past sunset in a golden afterglow. Landing at the port named after Empedocles, having caught from the sea some glimpses of temple-fronts emergent on green hill-slopes among almond-trees, with Pindar's epithet of 'splendour-loving' in my mind, I rode on such an evening up the path which leads across the Drago to Girgenti. The way winds through deep-sunk lanes of rich amber sandstone, hedged with cactus and dwarf-palm, and set with old gnarled olive-trees. As the sunlight faded, Venus shone forth in a luminous sky, and the deep yellows and purples overhead seemed to mingle with the heavy scent of orange-flowers from scarcely visible groves by the roadside. Saffron in the west and violet in the east met midway, composing a translucent atmosphere of mellow radiance, like some liquid gem—*dolce color d' oriental berillo*. Girgenti, far off and far up, gazing seaward, and rearing her topaz-coloured bastions into that gorgeous twilight, shone like the aerial vision of cities seen in dreams or imaged in the clouds. Hard and sharp against the fallow line of sunset, leaned grotesque shapes of cactuses like hydras, and delicate silhouettes of young olive-trees like sylphs: the river ran silver in the hollow, and the mountain-side on which the town is piled was solid gold. Then came the dirty dull interior of Girgenti, misnamed the magnificent. But no disenchantment could destroy the memory of that vision, and Pindar's *φιλάγλαος* 'Ἀκράγας remains in my mind a reality.¹

The temples of Girgenti are at the distance of two miles

¹ Lest I should seem to have overstated the splendour of this sunset view, I must remark that the bare dry landscape of the south is peculiarly fortunate in such effects. The local tint of the Girgenti rock is yellow. The vegetation on the hillside is sparse. There is nothing to prevent the colours of the sky being reflected upon the vast amber-tinted surface, which then glows with indescribable glory.

from the modern town. Placed upon the edge of an irregular plateau which breaks off abruptly into cliffs of moderate height below them, they stand in a magnificent row between the sea and plain on one side, and the city and the hills upon the other. Their colour is that of dusky honey or dun amber ; for they are not built of marble, but of sandstone, which at some not very distant geological period must have been a sea-bed. Oyster and scallop shells are embedded in the roughly hewn masonry, while here and there patches of a red deposit, apparently of broken coralline, make the surface crimson. The vegetation against which the ruined colonnades are relieved consists almost wholly of almond and olive trees, the bright green foliage of the one mingling with the greys of the other, and both enhancing the warm tints of the stone. This contrast of colours is very agreeable to the eye ; yet when the temples were perfect it did not exist. There is no doubt that their surface was coated with a fine stucco, wrought to smoothness, toned like marble, and painted over with the blue and red and green decorations proper to the Doric style. This fact is a practical answer to those æsthetic critics who would fain establish that the Greeks practised no deception in their arts. The whole effect of the colonnades of Selinus and Girgenti must have been an illusion, and their surface must have needed no less constant reparation than the exterior of a Gothic cathedral. The sham jewellery frequently found in Greek tombs, and the curious mixture of marble with sandstone in the sculptures from Selinus, are other instances that Greeks no less than modern artists condescended to trickery for the sake of effect. In the series of the metopes from Selinus now preserved in the museum at Palermo, the flesh of the female persons is represented by white marble, while that of the men, together with the dresses and other accessories, is wrought of common

stone. Yet the basreliefs in which this peculiarity occurs belong to the best period of Greek sculpture, and the groups are not unworthy for spirit and design to be placed by the side of the metopes of the Parthenon. Most beautiful, for example, is the contrast between the young unarmed Hercules and the Amazon he overpowers. His naked man's foot grasps with the muscular energy of an athlete her soft and helpless woman's foot, the roughness of the sandstone and the smoothness of the marble really heightening the effect of difference.

Though ranged in a row along the same cornice, the temples of Girgenti, originally at least six in number, were not so disposed that any of their architectural lines should be exactly parallel. The Greeks disliked formality; the carefully calculated *asymmetreia* in the disposition of their groups of buildings secured variety of effect as well as a broken surface for the display of light and shadow. This is very noticeable on the Acropolis of Athens, where, however regular may be the several buildings, all are placed at different angles to each other and the hill. Only two of the Girgenti temples survive in any degree of perfection—the so-called Concordia and the Juno Lacinia. The rest are but mere heaps of mighty ruins, with here and there a broken column, and in one place an angle of a pediment raised upon a group of pillars. The foundations of masonry which supported them and the drums of their gigantic columns are tufted with wild palm, aloe, asphodel, and crimson snapdragon. Yellow blossoming sage, and mint, and lavender, and mignonette, sprout in the crevices where snakes and lizards harbour. The grass around is gemmed with blue pimpernel and convolvulus. Gladiolus springs amid the young corn-blades beneath the almond-trees; while a beautiful little iris makes the most unpromising dry places brilliant with its delicate greys and blues. In cooler

and damper hollows, around the boles of old olives and under ruined arches, flourishes the tender acanthus, and the road-sides are gaudy with a yellow daisy flower, which may perchance be the ἐλάχνος of Theocritus. Thus the whole scene is a wilderness of brightness, less radiant but more touching than when processions of men and maidens bearing urns and laurel-branches, crowned with ivy or with myrtle, paced along those sandstone roads, chanting pæans and prosodial hymns, toward the glistening porches and hypæthral cells.

The only temple about the name of which there can be no doubt is that of Zeus Olympius. A prostrate giant who once with nineteen of his fellows helped to support the roof of this enormous fane, and who now lies in pieces among the asphodels, remains to prove that this was the building begun by the Agrigentines after the defeat of the Phœnicians at the Himera, when slaves were many and spoil was abundant, and Hellas both in Sicily and on the mainland felt a more than usual thrill of gratitude to their ancestral deity. The greatest architectural works of the island, the temples of Segeste and Selinus, as well as those of Girgenti, were begun between this period and the Carthaginian invasion of 409 B.C. The victory of the Hellenes over the barbarians in 480 B.C., symbolised in the victory of Zeus over the enslaved Titans of this temple, gave a vast impulse to their activity and wealth. After the disastrous incursion of the same foes seventy years later, the western Greek towns of the island received a check from which they never recovered. Many of their noblest buildings remained unfinished. The question which rises to the lips of all who contemplate the ruins of this gigantic temple and its compeer dedicated to Herakles is this: Who wrought the destruction of works so solid and enduring? For what purpose of spite or interest were those vast columns—in the very flutings of which a man can stand with ease—felled like

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forest pines? One sees the mighty pillars lying as they sank, like swathes beneath the mower's scythe. Their basements are still in line. The drums which composed them have fallen asunder, but maintain their original relation to each other on the ground. Was it earthquake or the hand of man that brought them low? Poggio Bracciolini tells us that in the fifteenth century they were burning the marble buildings of the Roman Campagna for lime. We know that the Senator Brancaleone made havoc among the classic monuments occupied as fortresses by Frangipani and Savelli and Orsini. We understand how the Farnesi should have quarried the Coliseum for their palace. But here, at the distance of three miles from Girgenti, in a comparative desert, what army, or what band of ruffians, or what palace-builders could have found it worth their while to devastate mere mountains of sculptured sandstone? The Romans invariably respected Greek temples. The early Christians used them for churches:—and this accounts for the comparative perfection of the Concordia. It was in the age of the Renaissance that the ruin of Girgenti's noblest monuments occurred. The temple of Zeus Olympius was shattered in the fifteenth century, and in the next its fragments were used to build a breakwater. The demolition of such substantial edifices is as great a wonder as their construction. We marvel at the energy which must have been employed on their overthrow, no less than at the art which raised such blocks of stone and placed them in position.

While so much remains both at Syracuse and at Girgenti to recall the past, we are forced here, as at Athens, to feel how very little we really know about Greek life. We cannot bring it up before our fancy with any clearness, but rather in a sort of hazy dream, from which some luminous points emerge. The entrance of an Olympian victor through the

breach in the city walls of Girgenti, the procession of citizens conducting old Timoleon in his chariot to the theatre, the conferences of the younger Dionysius with Plato in his guarded palace-fort, the stately figure of Empedocles presiding over incantations in the marshes of Selinus, the austerity of Dion and his mystic dream, the first appearance of stubborn Gylippus with long Lacedæmonian hair in the theatre of Syracuse,—such picturesque pieces of history we may fairly well recapture. But what were the daily occupations of the Simætha of Theocritus? What was the state dress of the splendid Queen Philistis, whose name may yet be read upon her seat, and whose face adorns the coins of Syracuse? How did the great altar of Zeus look, when the oxen were being slaughtered there by hundreds, in a place which must have been shambles and meat-market and temple all in one? What scene of architectural splendour met the eyes of the swimmers in the Piscina of Girgenti? How were the long hours of so many days of leisure occupied by the Greeks, who had each three pillows to his head in ‘splendour-loving Acragas’? Of what sort was the hospitality of Gellias? Questions like these rise up to tantalise us with the hopelessness of ever truly recovering the life of a lost race. After all the labour of antiquary and the poet, nothing remains to be uttered but such moralisings as Sir Thomas Browne poured forth over the urns discovered at Old Walsingham: ‘What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observers.’ Death reigns over the peoples of the past, and we must fain be satisfied to cry with

Raleigh: 'O eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of men, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *hic jacet*.' Even so. Yet while the cadence of this august rhetoric is yet in our ears, another voice is heard as of the angel seated by a void and open tomb, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' The spirit of Hellas is indestructible, however much the material existence of the Greeks be lost beyond recovery; for the life of humanity is not many but one, not parcelled into separate moments but continuous.

ATHENS

ATHENS, by virtue of scenery and situation, was predestined to be the motherland of the free reason of mankind, long before the Athenians had won by their great deeds the right to name their city the ornament and the eye of Hellas. Nothing is more obvious to one who has seen many lands and tried to distinguish their essential characters, than the fact that no one country exactly resembles another, but that, however similar in climate and locality, each presents a peculiar and well-marked property belonging to itself alone. The specific quality of Athenian landscape is light—not richness or sublimity or romantic loveliness or grandeur of mountain outline, but luminous beauty, serene exposure to the airs of heaven. The harmony and balance of the scenery, so varied in its details and yet so comprehensible, are sympathetic to the temperance of Greek morality, the moderation of Greek art. The radiance with which it is illuminated has all the clearness and distinction of the Attic intellect. From whatever point the plain of Athens with its semicircle of greater and lesser hills may be surveyed, it always presents a picture of dignified and lustrous beauty. The Acropolis is the centre of this landscape, splendid as a work of art with its crown of temples; and the sea, surmounted by the long low hills of the Morea, is the boundary to which the eye is irresistibly led. Mountains and islands and plain alike are made of limestone, hardening here and there into marble, broken

into delicate and varied forms, and sprinkled with a vegetation of low shrubs and brushwood so sparse and slight that the naked rock in every direction meets the light. This rock is grey and colourless: viewed in the twilight of a misty day, it shows the dull, tame uniformity of bone. Without the sun it is asleep and sorrowful. But by reason of this very deadness, the limestone of Athenian landscape is always ready to take the colours of the air and sun. In noonday it smiles with silvery lustre, fold upon fold of the indented hills and islands melting from the brightness of the sea into the untempered brilliance of the sky. At dawn and sunset the same rocks array themselves with a celestial robe of rainbow-woven hues: islands, sea, and mountains, far and near, burn with saffron, violet, and rose, with the tints of beryl and topaz, sapphire and almandine and amethyst, each in due order and at proper distances. The fabled dolphin in its death could not have showed a more brilliant succession of splendours waning into splendours through the whole chord of prismatic colours. This sensitiveness of the Attic limestone to every modification of the sky's light gives a peculiar spirituality to the landscape. The hills remain in form and outline unchanged; but the beauty breathed upon them lives or dies with the emotions of the air from whence it emanates: the spirit of light abides with them and quits them by alternations that seem to be the pulses of an ethereally communicated life. No country, therefore, could be better fitted for the home of a race gifted with exquisite sensibilities, in whom humanity should first attain the freedom of self-consciousness in art and thought. 'Αεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς αἰθέρος—ever delicately moving through most translucent air—said Euripides of the Athenians: and truly the bright air of Attica was made to be breathed by men in whom the light of culture should begin to shine. 'Ισοτέφρος is an epithet

of Aristophanes for his city ; and if not crowned with other violets, Athens wears for her garland the air-empurpled hills—Hymettus, Lycabettus, Pentelicus, and Parnes.¹ Consequently, while still the Greeks of Homer's age were Achæians, while Argos was the titular seat of Hellenic empire, and the mythic deeds of the heroes were being enacted in Thebes or Mycenæ, Athens did but bide her time, waiting to manifest herself as the true godchild of Pallas, who sprang perfect from the brain of Zeus, Pallas, who is the light of cloudless heaven emerging after storms. And Pallas, when she planted her chosen people in Attica, knew well what she was doing. To the far-seeing eyes of the goddess, although the first-fruits of song and science and philosophy might be reaped upon the shores of the Ægean and the islands, yet the days were clearly descried when Athens should stretch forth her hand to hold the lamp of all her founder loved for Europe. As the priest of Egypt told Solon : ' She chose the spot of earth in which you were born, because she saw that the happy temperament of the seasons in that land would produce the wisest of men. Wherefore the goddess, who was a lover both of war and wisdom, selected and first of all settled that spot which was the most likely to produce men likest herself.' This sentence from the 'Timæus' of Plato² reveals the consciousness possessed by the Greeks of that intimate connection which subsists between a country and the temper of its race. To us the name Athenai—the fact that Athens by its title even in the prehistoric age was marked out as the appanage of her

¹ This interpretation of the epithet *ἰοστόφανος* is not, I think, merely fanciful. It seems to occur naturally to those who visit Athens with the language of Greek poets in their memory. I was glad to find, on reading a paper by the Dean of Westminster on the topography of Greece, that the same thought had struck him. Ovid, too, gives the adjective *purpureus* to Hymettus.

² Jowett's translation, vol. ii. p. 520.

who was the patroness of culture—seems a fortunate accident, an undesigned coincidence of the most striking sort. To the Greeks, steeped in mythologic faith, accustomed to regard their lineage as autochthonous and their polity as the fabric of a god, nothing seemed more natural than that Pallas should have selected for her own exactly that portion of Hellas where the arts and sciences might flourish best. Let the Bœotians grow fat and stagnant upon their rich marsh-lands: let the Spartans form themselves into a race of soldiers in their mountain fortress: let Corinth reign, the queen of commerce, between her double seas: let the Arcadians in their oak woods worship pastoral Pan: let the plains of Elis be the meeting-place of Hellenes at their sacred games: let Delphi boast the seat of sooth oracular from Phœbus. Meanwhile the sunny but barren hills of Attica, open to the magic of the sky, and beautiful by reason of their nakedness, must be the home of a people powerful by might of intelligence rather than strength of limb, wealthy not so much by natural resources as by enterprise. Here, and here only, could stand the city sung by Milton:—

Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
 Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
 And eloquence, native to famous wits
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
 City or suburban, studious walks and shades.

We who believe in no authentic Pallas, child of Zeus, may yet pause awhile, when we contemplate Athens, to ponder whether those old mythologic systems, which ascribed to god-head the foundation of states and the patronage of peoples, had not some glimpse of truth beyond a mere blind guess. Is not, in fact, this Athenian land the promised and predestined home of a peculiar people, in the same sense as that

in which Palestine was the heritage by faith of a tribe set apart by Jehovah for His own?

Unlike Rome, Athens leaves upon the memory one simple and ineffaceable impression. There is here no conflict between Paganism and Christianity, no statues of Hellas baptised by popes into the company of saints, no blending of the classical and mediæval and Renaissance influences in a bewilderment of vast antiquity. Rome, true to her historical vocation, embraces in her ruins all ages, all creeds, all nations. Her life has never stood still, but has submitted to many transformations, of which the traces are still visible. Athens, like the Greeks of history, is isolated in a sort of self-completion: she is a thing of the past, which still exists, because the spirit never dies, because beauty is a joy for ever. What is truly remarkable about the city is just this, that while the modern town is an insignificant mushroom of the present century, the monuments of Greek art in the best period—the masterpieces of Ictinus and Mnesicles, and the theatre on which the plays of the tragedians were produced—survive in comparative perfection, and are so far unencumbered with subsequent edifices that the actual Athens of Pericles absorbs our attention. There is nothing of any consequence intermediate between us and the fourth century B.C. Seen from a distance the Acropolis presents nearly the same appearance as it offered to Spartan guardsmen when they paced the ramparts of Deceleia. Nature around is all unaltered. Except that more villages, enclosed with olive-groves and vineyards, were sprinkled over those bare hills in classic days, no essential change in the landscape has taken place, no transformation, for example, of equal magnitude with that which converted the Campagna of Rome from a plain of cities to a poisonous solitude. All through the centuries which divide us from the age of Hadrian—centuries unfilled, as far as Athens is concerned,

with memorable deeds or national activity—the Acropolis has stood uncovered to the sun. The tones of the marble of Pentelicus have daily grown more golden; decay has here and there invaded frieze and capital; war too has done its work, shattering the Parthenon in 1687 by the explosion of a powder magazine, and the Propylæa in 1656 by a similar accident, and seaming the colonnades that still remain with cannon-balls in 1827. Yet in spite of time and violence the Acropolis survives, a miracle of beauty: like an everlasting flower, through all that lapse of years it has spread its coronal of marbles to the air, unheeded. And now, more than ever, its temples seem to be incorporate with the rock they crown. The slabs of column and basement have grown together by long pressure or molecular adhesion into a coherent whole. Nor have weeds or creeping ivy invaded the glittering fragments that strew the sacred hill. The sun's kiss alone has caused a change from white to amber-hued or russet. Meanwhile, the exquisite adaptation of Greek building to Greek landscape has been enhanced rather than impaired by that 'unimaginable touch of time,' which has broken the regularity of outline, softened the chisel-work of the sculptor, and confounded the painter's fretwork in one tint of glowing gold. The Parthenon, the Erechtheum, and the Propylæa have become one with the hill on which they cluster, as needful to the scenery around them as the everlasting mountains, as sympathetic as the rest of nature to the successions of morning and evening, which waken them to passionate life by the magic touch of colour.

Thus there is no intrusive element in Athens to distract the mind from memories of its most glorious past. Walk into the theatre of Dionysus. The sculptures that support the stage—Sileni bending beneath the weight of cornices, and lines of graceful youths and maidens—are still in their

ancient station.¹ The pavement of the orchestra, once trodden by Athenian choruses, presents its tessellated marbles to our feet; and we may choose the seat of priest or archon or herald or thesmothetes, when we wish to summon before our mind's eye the pomp of the 'Agamemnon' or the dances of the 'Birds' and 'Clouds.' Each seat still bears some carven name—*ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΜΟΥΣΩΝ* or *ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΣΚΑΗΠΙΟΥ*—and that of the priest of Dionysus is beautifully wrought with Bacchic basreliefs. One of them, inscribed *ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΟΥ*, proves indeed that the extant chairs were placed here in the age of Hadrian, who completed the vast temple of Zeus Olympius, and filled its precincts with statues of his favourite, and named a new Athens after his own name.² Yet we need not doubt that their position round the orchestra is traditional, and that even in their form they do not differ from those which the priests and officers of Athens used from the time of Æschylus downward. Probably a slave brought cushion and footstool to complete the comfort of these stately armchairs. Nothing else is wanted to render them fit now for their august occupants; and we may imagine the long-stoled greybearded men throned in state, each with his wand and with appropriate fillets on his head. As we rest here in the light of the full moon, which simplifies all outlines and heals with tender touch the wounds of ages, it is easy enough to dream ourselves into the belief that the ghosts of dead actors may once more glide across the stage.

¹ It is true, however, that these sculptures belong to a comparatively late period, and that the theatre underwent some alterations in Roman days, so that the stage is now probably a few yards farther from the seats than in the time of Sophocles.

² It is not a little surprising to come upon this relic of the worship of the young Bithynian at Athens in the theatre still consecrated by the memories of Æschylus and Sophocles.

Fiery-hearted Medea, statuesque Antigone, Prometheus silent beneath the hammer-strokes of Force and Strength, Orestes hounded by his mother's Furies, Cassandra aghast before the palace of Mycenæ, pure-souled Hippolytus, ruthful Alcestis, the divine youth of Helen, and Clytemnestra in her queenliness, emerge like faint grey films against the bluish background of Hymettus. The night air seems vocal with echoes of old Greek, more felt than heard, like voices wafted to our sense in sleep, the sound whereof we do not seize, though the burden lingers in our memory.

In like manner, when moonlight, falling aslant upon the Propylæa, restores the marble masonry to its original whiteness, and the shattered heaps of ruined colonnades are veiled in shadow, and every form seems larger, grander, and more perfect than by day, it is well to sit upon the lowest steps, and looking upwards, to remember what processions passed along this way bearing the sacred peplus to Athene. The Panathenaic pomp, which Pheidias and his pupils carved upon the friezes of the Parthenon, took place once in five years, on one of the last days of July.¹ All the citizens joined in the honour paid to their patroness. Old men bearing olive-branches, young men clothed in bronze, chapleted youths singing the praise of Pallas in prosodial hymns, maidens carrying holy vessels, aliens bending beneath the weight of urns, servants of the temple leading oxen crowned with fillets, troops of horsemen reining in impetuous steeds: all these pass before us in the frieze of Pheidias. But to our imagination must be left what he has refrained from sculpturing, the chariot formed like a ship, in which the most illustrious nobles of Athens sat, splendidly arrayed, beneath the crocus-coloured curtain or

¹ My purpose being merely picturesque, I have ignored the grave antiquarian difficulties which beset the interpretation of this frieze.

peplus outspread upon a mast. Some concealed machinery caused this car to move ; but whether it passed through the Propylæa, and entered the Acropolis, admits of doubt. It is, however, certain that the procession which ascended those steep slabs, and before whom the vast gates of the Propylæa swang open with the clangour of resounding bronze, included not only the citizens of Athens and their attendant aliens, but also troops of cavalry and chariots ; for the mark of chariot-wheels can still be traced upon the rock. The ascent is so abrupt that this multitude moved but slowly. Splendid indeed, beyond any pomp of modern ceremonial, must have been the spectacle of the well-ordered procession, advancing through those giant colonnades to the sound of flutes and solemn chants—the shrill clear voices of boys in antiphonal chorus rising above the confused murmurs of such a crowd, the clanging of horses' hoofs upon the stone, and the lowing of bewildered oxen.

To realise by fancy the many-coloured radiance of the temples, and the rich dresses of the votaries illuminated by that sharp light of a Greek sun, which defines outline and shadow and gives value to the faintest hue, would be impossible. All we can know for positive about the chromatic decoration of the Greeks is, that whiteness artificially subdued to the tone of ivory prevailed throughout the stonework of the buildings, while blue and red and green in distinct, yet interwoven patterns, added richness to the fretwork and the sculpture of pediment and frieze. The sacramental robes of the worshippers accorded doubtless with this harmony, wherein colour was subordinate to light, and light was toned to softness.

‡ Musing thus upon the staircase of the Propylæa, we may say with truth that all our modern art is but child's play to that of the Greeks. Very soul-subduing is the gloom of a

cathedral like the Milanese Duomo, when the incense rises in blue clouds athwart the bands of sunlight falling from the dome, and the crying of choirs upborne upon the wings of organ music fills the whole vast space with a mystery of melody. Yet such ceremonial pomps as this are as dreams and the shapes of visions, when compared with the clearly defined splendours of a Greek procession through marble peristyles in open air beneath the sun and sky. That spectacle combined the harmonies of perfect human forms in movement with the divine shapes of statues, the radiance of carefully selected vestments with hues inwrought upon pure marble. The rhythms and the melodies of the Doric mood were sympathetic to the proportions of the Doric colonnades. The grove of pillars through which the pageant passed grew from the living rock into shapes of beauty, fulfilling by the inbreathed spirit of man Nature's blind yearning after absolute completion. The sun himself—not thwarted by artificial gloom, or tricked with alien colours of stained glass—was made to minister in all his strength to a pomp, the pride of which was the display of form in manifold magnificence. The ritual of the Greeks was the ritual of a race at one with Nature, glorying in its affiliation to the mighty mother of all life, and striving to add by human art the coping-stone and final touch to her achievement. The ritual of the Catholic Church is the ritual of a race shut out from Nature, holding no communion with the powers of earth and air, but turning the spirit inwards and aiming at the concentration of the whole soul upon an unseen God. The temple of the Greeks was the house of a present deity; its cell his chamber; its statue his reality. The Christian cathedral is the fane where God who is a spirit is worshipped; no statue fills the choir from wall to wall and lifts its forehead to the roof; but the vacant aisles, with their convergent arches soaring upwards

to the dome, are made to suggest the brooding of infinite and omnipresent Godhead. It was the object of the Greek artist to preserve a just proportion between the god's statue and his house, in order that the worshipper might approach him as a subject draws near to his monarch's throne. The Christian architect seeks to affect the emotions of the votary with a sense of vastness filled with unseen power. Our cathedrals are symbols of the universe where God is everywhere pavilioned and invisible. The Greek temple was a practical, utilitarian dwelling-house, made beautiful enough to suit divinity. The modern church is an idea expressed in stone, an aspiration of the spirit, shooting up from arch and pinnacle and spire into illimitable fields of air.

It follows from these differences between the religious aims of Pagan and Christian architecture, that the former was far more favourable to the plastic arts. No beautiful or simple incident of human life was an inappropriate subject for the sculptor, in adorning the houses of gods who were themselves but human on a higher level; and the ritual whereby the gods were honoured was merely an exhibition, in its strength and joyfulness, of mortal beauty. Therefore the Panathenaic procession furnished Pheidias with a series of sculptural motives, which he had only to express according to the principles of his art. The frieze, three feet and four inches in height, raised forty feet above the pavement of the peristyle, ran for five hundred and twenty-four continuous feet round the outside wall of the cella of the Parthenon. The whole of this long line was wrought with carving of exquisite delicacy and supreme vigour, in such low relief as its peculiar position, far above the heads of the spectators, and only illuminated by light reflected from below, required. Each figure, each attitude, and each fold of drapery in its countless groups is a study; yet the whole was a transcript from actual contemporary

Athenian life. Truly in matters of art we are but infants to the Greeks.

The topographical certainty which invests the ruins of the Acropolis with such peculiar interest, belongs in a less degree to the whole of Athens. Although the most recent researches have thrown fresh doubt upon the exact site of the Pnyx, and though no traces of the agora remain, yet we may be sure that the Bema from which Pericles sustained the courage of the Athenians during the Peloponnesian war, was placed upon the northern slope looking towards the Propylæa, while the wide irregular space between this hill, the Acropolis, the Areopagus, and the Theseum, must have formed the meeting-ground for amusement and discussion of the citizens at leisure. About Areopagus, with its tribunal hollowed in the native rock, and the deep cleft beneath, where the shrine of the Eumenides was built, there is no question. The extreme insignificance of this little mound may at first indeed excite incredulity and wonder; but a few hours in Athens accustom the traveller to a smallness of scale which at first sight seemed ridiculous. Colonus, for example, the Colonus which every student of Sophocles has pictured to himself in the solitude of unshorn meadows, where groves of cypresses and olives bent unpruned above wild tangles of narcissus-flowers and crocuses, and where the nightingale sang undisturbed by city noise or labour of the husbandman, turns out to be a scarcely appreciable mound, gently swelling from the cultivated land of the Cephissus. The Cephissus even in a rainy season may be crossed dryshod by an active jumper; and the Ilissus, where it flows beneath the walls of the Olympieion, is now dedicated to washerwomen instead of water-nymphs. Nature herself remains, on the whole, unaltered. Most notable are still the white poplars dedicated of old to Herakles, and the spreading planes which whisper to the

limes in spring. In the midst of so arid and bare a landscape, these umbrageous trees are singularly grateful to the eye and to the sense oppressed with heat and splendour. Nightingales have not ceased to crowd the gardens in such numbers as to justify the tradition of their Attic origin, nor have the bees of Hymettus forgotten their labours : the honey of Athens can still boast a quality superior to that of Hybla or any other famous haunt of hives.

Tradition points out one spot which commands a beautiful distant view of Athens and the hills, as the garden of the Academy. The place is not unworthy of Plato and his companions. Very old olives grow in abundance, to remind us of those sacred trees beneath which the boys of Aristophanes ran races ; and reeds with which they might crown their foreheads are thickly scattered through the grass. Abeles interlace their murmuring branches overhead, and the planes are as leafy as that which invited Socrates and Phædrus on the morning when they talked of love. In such a place we comprehend how philosophy went hand in hand at Athens with gymnastics, and why the poplar and the plane were dedicated to athletic gods. For the wrestling-grounds were built in groves like these, and their cool peristyles, the meeting-places of young men and boys, supplied the sages not only with an eager audience, but also with the leisure and the shade that learning loves.

It was very characteristic of Greek life that speculative philosophy should not have chosen 'to walk the studious cloister pale,' but should rather have sought out places where 'the busy hum of men' was londest, and where youthful voices echoed. The Athenian transacted no business, and pursued but few pleasures, under a private roof. He conversed and bargained in the agora, debated on the open rocks of the Pnyx, and enjoyed discussion in the courts of the

gymnasium. It is also far from difficult to understand beneath this over-vaulted and grateful gloom of bee-laden branches, what part love played in the haunts of runners and of wrestlers, why near the statue of Hermes stood that of Erôs, and wherefore Socrates surnamed his philosophy the Science of Love. Φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἀνὲν μαλακίας is the boast of Pericles in his description of the Athenian spirit. Φιλοσοφία μετὰ παιδεραστίας is Plato's formula for the virtues of the most distinguished soul. These two mottoes, apparently so contradictory, found their point of meeting and their harmony in the gymnasium.

The mere contemplation of these luxuriant groves, set in the luminous Attic landscape, and within sight of Athens, explains a hundred passages of poets and philosophers. Turn to the opening scenes of the 'Lysis' and the 'Charmides.' The action of the latter dialogue is laid in the palaestra of Taureas. Socrates has just returned from the camp at Potidæa, and after answering the questions of his friends, has begun to satisfy his own curiosity :¹—

When there had been enough of this, I, in my turn, began to make inquiries about matters at home—about the present state of philosophy, and about the youth. I asked whether any of them were remarkable for beauty or sense—or both. Critias, glancing at the door, invited my attention to some youths who were coming in, and talking noisily to one another, followed by a crowd. 'Of the beauties, Socrates,' he said, 'I fancy that you will soon be able to form a judgment. For those who are just entering are the advanced guard of the great beauty of the day—and he is likely not to be far off himself.'

'Who is he?' I said; 'and who is his father?'

'Charmides,' he replied, 'is his name; he is my cousin, and the son of my uncle Glaucon: I rather think that you know him, although he was not grown up at the time of your departure.'

'Certainly I know him,' I said; 'for he was remarkable even

¹ I quote from Professor Jowett's translation.

then when he was still a child, and now I should imagine that he must be almost a young man.'

'You will see,' he said, 'in a moment what progress he has made, and what he is like.' He had scarcely said the word, when Charmides entered.

Now you know, my friend, that I cannot measure anything, and of the beautiful, I am simply such a measure as a white line is of chalk; for almost all young persons are alike beautiful in my eyes. But at that moment, when I saw him coming in, I must admit that I was quite astonished at his beauty and stature; all the world seemed to be enamoured of him; amazement and confusion reigned when he entered; and a troop of lovers followed him. That grown-up men like ourselves should have been affected in this way was not surprising, but I observed that there was the same feeling among the boys; all of them, down to the very least child, turned and looked at him as if he had been a statue.

Chaerephon called me and said: 'What do you think of him, Socrates? Has he not a beautiful face?'

'That he has indeed,' I said.

'But you would think nothing of his face,' he replied, 'if you could see his naked form: he is absolutely perfect.'

This Charmides is a true Greek of the perfect type. Not only is he the most beautiful of Athenian youths; he is also temperate, modest, and subject to the laws of moral health. His very beauty is a harmony of well-developed faculties in which the mind and body are at one. How a young Greek managed to preserve this balance in the midst of the admiring crowds described by Socrates is a marvel. Modern conventions unfit our minds for realising the conditions under which he had to live. Yet it is indisputable that Plato has strained no point in the animated picture he presents of the palaestra. Aristophanes and Xenophon bear him out in all the details of the scene. We have to imagine a totally different system of social morality from ours, with virtues and vices, temptations and triumphs, unknown to our young men. The next scene from the 'Lysis' introduces us to another wrestling-ground

in the neighbourhood of Athens. Here Socrates meets with Hippothales, who is a devoted lover but a bad poet. Hippothales asks the philosopher's advice as to the best method of pleasing the boy Lysis :—

‘Will you tell me by what words or actions I may become endeared to my love?’

‘That is not easy to determine,’ I said; ‘but if you will bring your love to me, and will let me talk with him, I may perhaps be able to show you how to converse with him, instead of singing and reciting in the fashion of which you are accused.’

‘There will be no difficulty in bringing him,’ he replied; ‘if you will only go into the house with Ctesippus, and sit down and talk, he will come of himself; for he is fond of listening, Socrates. And as this is the festival of the Hermæa, there is no separation of young men and boys, but they are all mixed up together. He will be sure to come. But if he does not come, Ctesippus, with whom he is familiar, and whose relation Menexenus is, his great friend, shall call him.’

‘That will be the way,’ I said. Thereupon I and Ctesippus went towards the Palæstra, and the rest followed.

Upon entering we found that the boys had just been sacrificing; and this part of the festival was nearly come to an end. They were all in white array, and games at dice were going on among them. Most of them were in the outer court amusing themselves; but some were in a corner of the Apodyterium playing at odd-and-even with a number of dice, which they took out of little wicker baskets. There was also a circle of lookers-on, one of whom was Lysis. He was standing among the other boys and youths, having a crown upon his head, like a fair vision, and not less worthy of praise for his goodness than for his beauty. We left them, and went over to the opposite side of the room, where we found a quiet place, and sat down; and then we began to talk. This attracted Lysis, who was constantly turning round to look at us—he was evidently wanting to come to us. For a time he hesitated and had not the courage to come alone; but first of all, his friend Menexenus came in out of the court in the interval of his play, and when he saw Ctesippus and myself, came and sat by us; and then Lysis, seeing him, followed and sat down with him; and the other boys joined. I should observe that Hippothales, when he saw the

crowd, got behind them, where he thought that he would be out of sight of Lysis, lest he should anger him; and there he stood and listened.

Enough has been quoted to show that beneath the porches of a Greek palæstra, among the youths of Athens, who wrote no exercises in dead languages, and thought chiefly of attaining to perfect manhood by the harmonious exercise of mind and body in temperate leisure, divine philosophy must indeed have been charming both to teachers and to learners:—

Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

There are no remains above ground of the buildings which made the Attic gymnasia splendid. Nor are there in Athens itself many statues of the noble human beings who paced their porches and reclined beneath their shade. The galleries of Italy and the verses of the poets can alone help us to repeople the Academy with its mixed multitude of athletes and of sages. The language of Simætha, in Theocritus, brings the younger men before us: their cheeks are yellower than helichrysus with the down of youth, and their breasts shine brighter far than the moon, as though they had but lately left the 'fair toils of the wrestling-ground.' Upon some of the monumental tablets exposed in the burying-ground of Cerameicus and in the Theseum may be seen portraits of Athenian citizens. A young man holding a bird, with a boy beside him who carries a lamp or strigil; a youth, naked, and scraping himself after the games; a boy taking leave with clasped hands of his mother, while a dog leaps up to fawn upon his knee; a wine-party; a soul in Charon's boat; a husband parting from his wife: such are the simple.

subjects of these monuments; and under each is written $\text{XPH}\Sigma\text{TE XAIPE}$ —Friend, farewell! The tombs of the women are equally plain in character: a nurse brings a baby to its mother, or a slave helps her mistress at the toilette table. There is nothing to suggest either the gloom of the grave or the hope of heaven in any of these sculptures. Their symbolism, if it at all exist, is of the least mysterious kind. Our attention is rather fixed upon the commonest affairs of life than on the secrets of death.

As we wander through the ruins of Athens, among temples which are all but perfect, and gardens which still keep their ancient greenery, we must perforce reflect how all true knowledge of Greek life has passed away. To picture to ourselves its details, so as to become quite familiar with the way in which an Athenian thought and felt and occupied his time, is impossible. Such books as the 'Charicles' of Becker or Wieland's 'Agathon' only increase our sense of hopelessness, by showing that neither a scholar's learning nor a poet's fancy can pierce the mists of antiquity. We know that it was a strange and fascinating life, passed for the most part beneath the public eye, at leisure, without the society of free women, without what we call a home, in constant exercise of body and mind, in the duties of the law-courts and the assembly, in the toils of the camp and the perils of the sea, in the amusements of the wrestling-ground and the theatre, in sportful study and strenuous play. We also know that the citizens of Athens, bred up under the peculiar conditions of this artificial life, became impassioned lovers of their city;¹ that the greatest generals, statesmen, poets, orators, artists, historians, and philosophers that the world can boast, were produced in the short space of a century and a half by a city

¹ Τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ' ἡμεραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῇ.—Thuc. ii. 43.

numbering about 20,000 burghers. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say with the author of 'Hereditary Genius,' that the population of Athens, taken as a whole, was as superior to us as we are to the Australian savages. Long and earnest, therefore, should be our hesitation before we condemn as pernicious or unprofitable the instincts and the customs of such a race.

The permanence of strongly marked features in the landscape of Greece, and the small scale of the whole country, add a vivid charm to the scenery of its great events. In the harbour of Peiræus we can scarcely fail to picture to ourselves the pomp which went forth to Sicily that solemn morning, when the whole host prayed together and made libations at the signal of the herald's trumpet. The nation of athletes and artists and philosophers were embarked on what seemed to some a holiday excursion, and for others bid fair to realise unbounded dreams of ambition or avarice. Only a few were heavy-hearted; but the heaviest of all was the general who had vainly dissuaded his countrymen from the endeavour, and fruitlessly refused the command thrust upon him. That was 'the morning of a mighty day, a day of crisis' for the destinies of Athens. Of all that multitude, how few would come again; of the empire which they made so manifest in its pride of men and arms, how little but a shadow would be left, when war and fever and the quarries of Syracuse had done their fore-appointed work! Yet no commotion of the elements, no eclipse or authentic oracle from heaven, was interposed between the arrogance of Athens and sure-coming Nemesis. The sun shone, and the waves laughed, smitten by the oars of galleys racing to Ægina. Meanwhile Zeus from the watch-tower of the world held up the scales of fate, and the balance of Athens was wavering to its fall.

A few strokes of the oar carry us away from Peiræus to a

scene fraught with far more thrilling memories. That little point of rock emergent from the water between Salamis and the mainland, bare, insignificant, and void of honour among islands to the natural eye, is Psyttaleia. A strange tightening at the heart assails us when we approach the centre-point of the most memorable battlefield of history. It was again 'the morning of a mighty day, a day of crisis' for the destinies, not of Athens alone, but of humanity, when the Persian fleet, after rowing all night up and down the channel between Salamis and the shore, beheld the face of Phœbus flash from behind Pentelicus and flood the Acropolis of Athens with fire. The Peiræus recalls a crisis in the world's drama whereof the great actors were unconscious: fair winds and sunny waves bore light hearts to Sicily. But Psyttaleia brings before us the heroism of a handful of men, who knew that the supreme hour of ruin or of victory for their nation and themselves had come. Terrible therefore was the energy with which they prayed and joined their pæan to the trumpet-blast of dawn that blazed upon them from the Attic hills. And this time Zeus, when he heard their cry, saw the scale of Hellas mount to the stars. Let Æschylus tell the tale; for he was there. A Persian is giving an account of the defeat of Salamis to Atossa:—

The whole disaster, O my queen, began
 With some fell fiend or devil,—I know not whence :
 For thus it was; from the Athenian host
 A man of Hellas came to thy son, Xerxes,
 Saying that when black night shall fall in gloom,
 The Hellenes would no longer stay, but leap
 Each on the benches of his bark, and save
 Hither and thither by stolen flight their lives.
 He, when he heard thereof, discerning not
 The Hellene's craft, no, nor the spite of heaven,
 To all his captains gives this edict forth :
 When as the sun doth cease to light the world,

And darkness holds the precincts of the sky,
They should dispose the fleet in three close ranks,
To guard the outlets and the water-ways ;
Others should compass Ajax' isle around :
Seeing that if the Hellenes 'scaped grim death
By finding for their ships some privy exit,
It was ordained that all should lose their heads.
So spake he, led by a mad mind astray,
Nor knew what should be by the will of heaven.
They, like well-ordered vassals, with assent
Straightway prepared their food, and every sailor
Fitted his oar-blade to the steady rowlock.
But when the sunlight waned and night apace
Descended, every man who swayed an oar
Went to the boats with him who wielded armour.
Then through the ship's length rank cheered rank in
concert,

Sailing as each was set in order due :
And all night long the tyrants of the ships
Kept the whole navy cruising to and fro.
Night passed : yet never did the host of Hellene
At any point attempt their stolen sally ;
Until at length, when day with her white steeds
Forth shining, held the whole world under sway.
First from the Hellenes with a loud clear cry
Song-like, a shout made music, and therewith
The echo of the rocky isle rang back
Shrill triumph : but the vast barbarian host
Shorn of their hope trembled ; for not for flight
The Hellenes hymned their solemn pæan then—
Nay, rather as for battle with stout heart.
Then too the trumpet speaking fired our foes,
And with a sudden rush of oars in time
They smote the deep sea at that clarion cry ;
And in a moment you might see them all.
The right wing in due order well arrayed
First took the lead ; then came the serried squadron
Swelling against us, and from many voices
One cry arose : Ho ! sons of Hellenes, up !
Now free your fatherland, now free your sons,
Your wives, the fanes of your ancestral gods,

Your fathers' tombs ! Now fight you for your all.
 Yea, and from our side brake an answering hum
 Of Persian voices. Then, no more delay,
 Ship upon ship her beak of biting brass
 Struck stoutly. 'Twas a bark, I ween, of Hellas
 First charged, dashing from a Tyrrhenian galleon
 Her prow-gear ; then ran hull on hull pell-mell.
 At first the torrent of the Persian navy
 Bore up : but when the multitude of ships
 Were straitly jammed, and none could help another,
 Huddling with brazen-mouthèd beaks they clashed
 And brake their serried banks of oars together ;
 Nor were the Hellenes slow or slack to muster
 And pound them in a circle. Then ships' hulks
 Floated keel upwards, and the sea was covered
 With shipwreck multitudinous and with slaughter.
 The shores and jutting reefs were full of corpses.
 In indiscriminate rout, with straining oar,
 The whole barbarian navy turned and fled.
 Our foes, like men 'mid tunnies, draughts of fishes,
 With splintered oars and spokes of shattered spars
 Kept striking, grinding, smashing us : shrill shrieks
 With groanings mingled held the hollow deep,
 Till night's dark eye set limit to the slaughter.
 But for our mass of miseries, could I speak
 Straight on for ten days, I should never sum it :
 For know this well, never in one day died
 Of men so many multitudes before.

After a pause he resumes his narrative by describing
 Psyttaleia :—

There lies an island before Salamis,
 Small, with scant harbour, which dance-loving Pan
 Is wont to tread, haunting the salt sea-beaches.
 There Xerxes placed his chiefs, that when the foes
 Chased from their ships should seek the sheltering isle,
 They might with ease destroy the host of Hellas,
 Saving their own friends from the briny straits.
 Ill had he learned what was to hap ; for when
 God gave the glory to the Greeks at sea,

That same day, having fenced their flesh with brass,
They leaped from out their ships ; and in a circle
Enclosed the whole girth of the isle, that so
None knew where he should turn ; but many fell
Crushed with sharp stones in conflict, and swift arrows
Flew from the quivering bowstrings winged with murder.
At last in one fierce onset with one shout
They strike, hack, hew the wretches' limbs asunder,
Till every man alive had fallen beneath them.
Then Xerxes groaned, seeing the gulf unclose
Of grief below him ; for his throne was raised
High in the sight of all by the sea-shore.
Rending his robes, and shrieking a shrill shriek,
He hurriedly gave orders to his host ;
Then headlong rushed in rout and heedless ruin.

Atossa makes appropriate exclamations of despair and horror.
Then the messenger proceeds :—

The captains of the ships that were not shattered,
Set speedy sail in flight as the winds blew.
The remnant of the host died miserably,
Some in Bæotia round the glimmering springs
Tired out with thirst ; some of us scant of breath
Escaped with bare life to the Phocian bounds,
And land of Doris, and the Melian Gulf,
Where with kind draughts Spercheius soaks the soil.
Thence in our flight Achaia's ancient plain
And Thessaly's stronghold received us worn
For want of food. Most died in that fell place
Of thirst and famine ; for both deaths were there.
Yet to Magnesia came we and the coast
Of Macedonia, to the ford of Axios,
And Bolbe's canebrakes and the Pangæan range,
Edonian borders. Then in that grim night
God sent unseasonable frost, and froze
The stream of holy Strymon. He who erst
Recked nought of gods, now prayed with supplication,
Bowing before the powers of earth and sky.
But when the hosts from lengthy orisons
Surceased, it crossed the ice-incrusted ford.

And he among us who set forth before
 The sun-god's rays were scattered, now was saved.
 For blazing with sharp beams the sun's bright circle
 Pierced the mid-stream, dissolving it with fire.
 There were they huddled. Happy then was he
 Who soonest cut the breath of life asunder.
 Such as survived and had the luck of living,
 Crossed Thrace with pain and peril manifold,
 'Scaping mischance, a miserable remnant,
 Into the dear land of their homes. Wherefore
 Persia may wail, wanting in vain her darlings.
 This is the truth. Much I omit to tell
 Of woes by God wrought on the Persian race.

Upon this triumphal note it were well, perhaps, to pause. Yet since the sojourner in Athens must needs depart by sea, let us advance a little way farther beyond Salamis. The low shore of the isthmus soon appears; and there is the hill of Corinth and the site of the city, as desolate now as when Antipater of Sidon made the sea-waves utter a threnos over her ruins. 'The deathless Nereids, daughters of Oceanus,' still lament by the shore, and the Isthmian pines are as green as when their boughs were plucked to bind a victor's forehead. Feathering the grey rock now as then, they bear witness to the wisdom and the moderation of the Greeks, who gave to the conquerors in sacred games no wreath of gold, or title of nobility, or land, or jewels, but the honour of an illustrious name, the guerdon of a mighty deed, and branches taken from the wild pine of Corinth, or the olive of Olympia, or the bay that flourished like a weed at Delphi. What was indigenous and characteristic of his native soil, not rare and costly things from foreign lands, was precious to the Greek. This piety, after the lapse of centuries and the passing away of mighty cities, still bears fruit. Oblivion cannot wholly efface the memory of those great games while the fir-trees rustle to the sea-wind as of old. Down the gulf we pass, between mountain

range and mountain. On one hand, two-peaked Parnassus rears his cope of snow aloft over Delphi; on the other, Erymanthus and Hermes' home, Cyllene, bar the pastoral glades of Arcady. Greece is the land of mountains, not of rivers or of plains. The titles of the hills of Hellas smite our ears with echoes of ancient music—Olympus and Cithæron, Taygetus, Othrys, Helicon, and Ida. The headlands of the mainland are mountains, and the islands are mountain summits of a submerged continent. Austerely beautiful, not wild with an Italian luxuriance, nor mournful with Sicilian monotony of outline, nor yet again overwhelming with the sublimity of Alps, they seem the proper home of a race which sought its ideal of beauty in distinction of shape and not in multiplicity of detail, in light and not in richness of colouring, in form and not in size.

At length the open sea is reached. Past Zante and Cephalonia we glide 'under a roof of blue Ionian weather;' or, if the sky has been troubled with storm, we watch the moulding of long glittering cloud-lines, processions and pomps of silvery vapour, fretwork and frieze of alabaster piled above the islands, pearled promontories and domes of rounded snow. Soon Santa Maura comes in sight:—

Leucatæ nimbosa cacumina montis,
Et formidatus nautis aperitur Apollo.

Here Sappho leapt into the waves to cure love-longing, according to the ancient story; and he who sees the white cliffs chafed with breakers and burning with fierce light, as it was once my luck to see them, may well with Childe Harold 'feel or deem he feels no common glow.' All through the afternoon it had been raining, and the sea was running high beneath a petulant west wind. But just before evening, while yet there remained a hand's-breadth between the sea and the

sinking sun, the clouds were rent and blown in masses about the sky. Rain still fell fretfully in scuds and fleeces; but where for hours there had been nothing but a monotone of greyness, suddenly fire broke and radiance and storm-clouds in commotion. Then, as if built up by music, a rainbow rose and grew above Leucadia, planting one foot on Actium and the other on Ithaca, and spanning with a horseshoe arch that touched the zenith, the long line of roseate cliffs. The clouds upon which this bow was woven were steel-blue beneath and crimson above; and the bow itself was bathed in fire—its violets and greens and yellows visibly ignited by the liquid flame on which it rested. The sea beneath, stormily dancing, flashed back from all its crest the same red glow, shining like a ridged lava-torrent in its first combustion. Then as the sun sank, the crags burned deeper with scarlet blushes as of blood, and with passionate bloom as of pomegranate or oleander flowers. Could Turner rise from the grave to paint a picture that should bear the name of ‘Sappho’s Leap,’ he might strive to paint it thus: and the world would complain that he had dreamed the poetry of his picture. But who could *dream* anything so wild and yet so definite? Only the passion of orchestras, the fire-flight of the last movement of the C minor symphony, can in the realms of art give utterance to the spirit of scenes like this.

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